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# SPEAKERS OF THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS

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GARY LEVY

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# **Speakers of the House of Commons**

**Gary Levy**

**Ottawa, 1996**







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## Acknowledgements

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This is the third revision of a book originally published in 1980. Numerous changes, notably in the way Speakers are chosen, have taken place in the intervening years but the Office of Speaker remains central to the well being of our parliamentary institutions.

Once again I am grateful to Richard Paré for encouragement and assistance in updating the text. As is usually the case many other individuals on the staff of the House of Commons and the Parliamentary Library were extremely helpful in checking facts or finding errors in the earlier editions. Any errors or omissions that remain are, of course, my sole responsibility.

Gary Levy  
Ottawa, Ontario  
March 1994

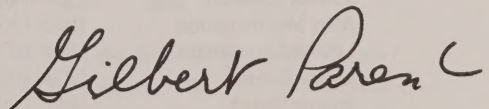
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## Preface

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In October 1993 Canadians elected a new Parliament and made it clear beyond any doubt they wanted a new approach to politics not only by the Government but by all politicians. With great humility I accepted the task of presiding over the House of Commons as it works to fulfill its mandate during the coming years. The task will not be easy, but in undertaking it I am encouraged in many ways by reading about the experiences of my predecessors.

Two points in particular strike me about these biographies. First, in our country the Speakership has never been limited to a narrow spectrum of society. Previous Speakers came from a wide variety of backgrounds including farmers, journalists, teachers, doctors as well as lawyers. Some had considerable experience in the ways of Parliament. Others had to learn the job as they went along. Second, I am reminded that as much as we desire a new approach to politics we must remember that Parliament is an old and venerable institution. These biographies shed light on how much our Parliament has changed in 127 years. It can and will continue to evolve but the best guarantee of a brighter future remains an understanding and appreciation of our past.



Gilbert Parent, M.P.

Speaker

House of Commons.



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## Speakers of the House

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Speaker	Years in office	Party	Prime Minister
James Cockburn	1867-1874	Conservative	Macdonald
Timothy Warren Anglin	1874-1878	Liberal	Mackenzie
Joseph-Godéric Blanchet	1879-1882	Conservative	Macdonald
George Airey Kirkpatrick	1883-1887	Conservative	Macdonald
Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet	1887-1891	Conservative	Macdonald
Peter White	1891-1895	Conservative	Macdonald, Abbott Thompson, Bowell
James David Edgar	1896-1899	Liberal	Laurier
Thomas Bain	1899-1900	Liberal	Laurier
Louis-Philippe Brodeur	1901-1904	Liberal	Laurier
Napoléon-Antoine Belcourt	1904	Liberal	Laurier
Robert Franklin Sutherland	1905-1908	Liberal	Laurier
Charles Marcl	1909-1911	Liberal	Laurier
Thomas Simpson Sproule	1911-1915	Conservative	Borden
Albert Sévigny	1916-1917	Conservative	Borden
Edgar Nelson Rhodes	1917-1922	Conservative	Borden, Meighen
Rodolphe Lemieux	1922-1930	Liberal	King, Meighen
George Black	1930-1935	Conservative	Bennett
James Langstaff Bowman	1935	Conservative	Bennett
Pierre-François Casgrain	1936-1940	Liberal	King
James Glen	1940-1945	Liberal	King
Gaspard Fauteux	1945-1949	Liberal	King, Saint-Laurent
Ross Macdonald	1949-1953	Liberal	Saint-Laurent
René Beaudoin	1953-1957	Liberal	Saint-Laurent
Roland Michener	1957-1962	Conservative	Diefenbaker
Marcel Lambert	1962-1963	Conservative	Diefenbaker
Alan Macnaughton	1963-1966	Liberal	Pearson
Lucien Lamoureux	1966-1974	Liberal	Pearson, Trudeau
James Jerome	1974-1980	Liberal	Trudeau, Clark
Jeanne Sauvé	1980-1984	Liberal	Trudeau
Lloyd Francis	1984	Liberal	Trudeau, Turner
John Bosley	1984-1986	Conservative	Mulroney
John Fraser	1986-1994	Conservative	Mulroney, Campbell
Gilbert Parent	(1994-	Liberal	Chrétien

## Introduction

Parliament is frequently referred to as the highest court in the land and like any court the task of ensuring civil and orderly proceedings in an adversarial atmosphere falls squarely on the presiding official. The Speakership, like Parliament itself, is not an indigenous Canadian institution. It developed in Great Britain over many hundreds of years. Not until the late seventeenth century did the Speaker, originally one of the King's advisors, become the undisputed servant of the Commons. Over the next hundred and fifty years the idea developed that the British Speaker should refrain from involvement in party politics either inside or outside the House.

At various stages of its development the Speakership was exported to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries where it was modified in the light of local conditions. The tradition of a non partisan Speaker had yet to emerge when legislative assemblies were established in the colonies of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Upper Canada and Lower Canada during the last half of the eighteenth century. Some Speakers such as Louis Joseph Papineau were in the forefront of the struggle for power against the Governor and his appointed officials.

Even when responsible government was achieved the Canadian Speakership retained a highly political dimension. The first business of every new Parliament is the election of a Speaker for without a Speaker the House cannot carry on any business. Between 1840 and 1867 more than one government failed to have its nominee confirmed by the House. Of the eight men who served as Speaker in the old United Province of Canada, half (Augustin Morin, Allan Macnab, Louis-Victor Sicotte and John Sandfield Macdonald) were at one time or another leaders of parties or factions in the loose coalition governments which characterized that era.



The *British North America Act* (1867) established a parliamentary democracy based on the unwritten conventions of responsible government. The Prime Minister and other members of cabinet sit in Parliament. They are at all times responsible to the House of Commons. If the government cannot retain support of a majority of members in the House it must either resign or seek a dissolution of Parliament for the purpose of a general election.

The United States, by contrast, is a congressional or presidential democracy based on a strict separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches. The president and cabinet are not allowed to



sit in Congress; they are elected by different methods, from different constituencies and hold office for different periods of time. Neither is responsible to the other nor can one of them compel the resignation of the other because of loss of confidence. The American approach to government is designed to prevent the abuse of power by an elaborate system of checks and balances. This makes it difficult to determine who, president or congress, is answerable for a particular policy.

Responsible government makes the question of accountability much clearer but it does so by concentrating tremendous power in the hands of the Prime Minister. Nevertheless certain checks and balances do exist to offset the power of the Prime Minister. One of these is the Speaker of the House of Commons who constitutes a considerable check on a government bent on abusing its authority.



The Speaker's role can be divided into three distinct categories – ceremonial, quasi-judicial and administrative – although the relative importance of each has changed over the years. The least onerous duties relate to the largely ceremonial role as spokesman for the House to the Senate and to the Crown. The Speaker reads messages from the Governor-General, presents bills for Royal Assent, announces the result of any vote in the House and brings to the attention of the House all matters affecting the rights and privileges of members.

More important is the quasi-judicial function of presiding over proceedings in the House. Although the Speaker is the servant of the House the Chair's control over question period and debate is all-pervasive. The Speaker calls on members to speak, rules on points of order, decides whether a matter of privilege should take precedence over other business, represses disorder should it arise, decides whether or not an emergency debate can be granted and generally interprets the Standing Orders in accordance with precedent.

While a legal background may be a definite asset in sorting out the intricacies of parliamentary procedure, the rendering of a technically correct decision is usually not difficult. Much harder is knowing the mood of the House and when to allow a member to bend the rules and when to be firm. Speakers must be authoritative without being overbearing; dignified but not lacking in wit or humour and capable of maintaining a distance from other members without appearing aloof. Above all the Speaker must remain completely impartial between members and between parties. Some decisions are bound to be controversial but it is essential they not be taken, or appear to be taken, for partisan reasons.

Various ceremonies and customs have developed to accentuate the independent authority of the Speaker. The Mace, symbol of the



authority of Parliament, is borne before the Speaker when on entering and leaving the Chamber. It is placed on the table in front of the Speaker and stays there while the House is in session. The Speaker sits upon an elaborately carved wooden chair mounted on a dais giving a commanding view of the chamber. All speeches must be addressed to the Chair. When the Speaker rises all microphones are cut off and the member who has the floor must sit down. Even the Speaker's costume is designed to impress. It consists of court dress under a black silk gown together with a black tricorne hat and white gloves. The Speaker is accorded fifth place in the official Order of Precedence following the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice and the Speaker of the Senate. The salaries and allowances of the Speaker are the same as for a cabinet minister and the Speaker also has use of an official residence. Upon retirement a Speaker is usually made a member of the Privy Council. He or she may be offered an appointment to the bench, a Senatorship, an ambassadorship or some other high public office.

Acceptance of the Speakership involves political and personal sacrifices. The Speaker is denied the right to participate in debate in the House and cannot vote except in the case of a tie. Even then precedent dictates that the Speaker shall vote not necessarily in accordance with any personal preference but in such a way as to keep the matter open for further consideration if possible. The Speakership usually involves a radical change in life style. The presiding officer must deliberately isolate himself from much of the camaraderie of the House of Commons. Friendships developed over the years are submerged in the wider circle that must include every member. No public official except the Governor-General is expected to do so much official entertaining.

In addition to all the other demands the Speaker is the head of a large administrative department responsible for providing a wide range of services to Members of Parliament. The Speaker chairs the Board of Internal Economy which prepares the budget for the House. The Speaker may appear before standing committees to explain the House's estimates.

General elections pose a special dilemma. Having sought to establish and maintain a reputation for impartiality the Speaker faces the prospect of either running as an independent or seeking the nomination of a political party. The former choice may be tantamount to defeat; the latter may jeopardize any ability to continue in the Chair.



From Confederation to 1986 the ritual for choosing speakers changed very little. On the day fixed by Proclamation for the initial meeting of Parliament the newly assembled members of the Commons gathered in their Chamber to await a message summoning them to the Senate. They

proceeded to the Senate Chamber where the Speaker of the Senate formally asked them to return to the House to elect their own Speaker. This election used to be conducted by the Clerk of the House of Commons. He would recognize the Prime Minister who would make a short speech on the importance of the Speakership and nominate a member to take the Chair. The Leader of the Opposition, if consulted, usually approved the choice. Other party leaders spoke briefly and there being no further nominations the Clerk put the question and declared the new Speaker elected. He or she was then escorted to the Chair by the mover and seconder of the nomination. From 1867 to 1986 no Speaker had been opposed for the nomination and only twice did the House divide over the question.

Following recommendations of a Special Committee on Reform of the House of Commons an important change in the way the Speaker is elected was adopted in 1986. The election is now conducted by secret ballot. All MPs except party leaders and ministers are automatically nominated unless they inform the Clerk of the House in writing that they do not wish to stand for election. On the first day of a new Parliament the MP with the longest period of unbroken service presides over the election. A ballot is distributed with the names of all candidates who have not withdrawn. The votes are counted by the Clerk in private. The candidate with the least votes is eliminated as are all candidates receiving less than 5% of the vote. Unless someone has 50% of the vote a revised list of candidates is then distributed. The voting continues until one person has a majority. Throughout the balloting no details are released about the number of votes cast for each candidate and after the final vote all ballots are destroyed. This new election process has been criticized by some for the amount of time it takes to select a Speaker. However there is no doubt that the prestige and authority of Presiding Officers have been enhanced by this process. The new system of election symbolizes the main concern of contemporary parliamentary reformers who have sought to give the elected representatives a greater say in what goes on in their Chamber. The parliamentary agenda has always been dominated by a few individuals – party leaders, House leaders, Whips. Some would argue that responsible government demands that it be so. But party discipline has gone too far if individual members feel their only function is to approve proposals put before them by party leaders.

Making members responsible for choosing their own presiding officer instead of ratifying one chosen for them by the Prime Minister is a small step toward greater political maturity. If members are unhappy about the performance of some future Speaker they have no one to blame but themselves. Similar if a Speaker makes a serious mistake he or she is more likely to be called to account rather than propped up by a government seeking to avoid embarrassment. The entire election

process seeks to emphasize the idea that the opinion of an individual MP counts for something.

The secret ballot also laid to rest a convention that had outlived its usefulness – the tradition of alternating between francophone and anglophone Speakers. French and English have been official languages of the House since Confederation but for many years only French-Canadian members were bilingual. Thus the choice of an anglophone Speaker forced French-Canadians to speak English if they wished to be understood by the chair. In the era before simultaneous translation the fairest solution that could be devised was to alternate the Speakership between the two language groups and to create, in 1885, the position of Deputy Speaker who was to be fluent in the language other than that of the Speaker.

With the advent of simultaneous translation in 1959, the existence of language-training programs over the past twenty years and the expansion of the number of assistants to the Speaker, the main argument in favour of alternation became a symbolic one. But the pool of talent available for and interested in the Speakership is relatively small. It became counterproductive to overlook individuals because they did not happen to be anglophone or francophone as dictated by the convention. The committee which recommended the secret ballot realized full well that if future votes broke down on strictly linguistic lines French-Canadians would always be in the minority. But in the final analysis the House of Commons is a bilingual institution and the linguistic ability of a candidate is a factor just like experience or knowledge of the rules.

It is a sign of increasing political maturity when members of the highest legislative body in the land believe enough in the bilingual basis of their institution to abandon the “two solitudes” assumption upon which the alternation convention was based and to replace it with nothing more than the good sense of the members elected to represent all Canadians.





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**James Cockburn 1867-1874**

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*Each new Parliament brings together representatives having a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. The first Parliament after Confederation was an unusually diverse mixture. A majority favoured the 1867 constitution but other members opposed the very idea of Confederation and had been elected on that basis. The cabinet contained some volatile and independent-minded individuals. There was no concept of an independent Speakership. In the old United Province of Canada the choice of a presiding officer had frequently been the first test of confidence in a government. Under these circumstances James Cockburn accepted the challenge and honour of becoming the first Speaker of the House of Commons.*

Cockburn was born in 1819 at Berwick-on-Tweed, an industrial town on the river separating England and Scotland. He was thirteen when his family migrated to Canada, a voyage marred by tragedy when Cockburn's father contracted cholera. He died shortly after their arrival in Montreal. The remainder of the family eventually settled in Toronto where James attended Upper Canada College. He studied law at Osgoode Hall, was called to the Bar of Upper Canada in 1846 and subsequently established a law practice at Cobourg.

Three times Cockburn was elected to Cobourg's municipal council during the 1850s. He had no thought of running for the Legislative Assembly in the 1861 election but the candidate of the Reform Party died a few weeks before polling day. When his replacement withdrew at the last minute, a group of citizens petitioned Cockburn to let his name stand. He accepted the draft and declared himself a candidate in opposition to the Liberal-Conservative administration. Despite his late entry and although his opponent, Postmaster-General Sidney Smith, had the personal support of Attorney-General John A. Macdonald, Cockburn won the seat by the narrow margin of twenty-seven votes.

The next six years were among the most turbulent in Canadian history. The Georges Cartier-John A. Macdonald coalition was soon defeated and replaced by the Dorion-Sandfield Macdonald administration. This ministry was even less acceptable to Cockburn than its predecessor so he remained in the opposition where he joined forces with his former adversaries. Cockburn was returned to the

legislature by acclamation in 1863. The next year a new Liberal-Conservative administration was formed under Étienne Taché and John A. Macdonald. They invited Cockburn to become Solicitor General.

The major public issue of the day was a proposal for confederation of the British North American colonies. Cockburn did not have a highly visible role in negotiations and debates preceding the agreement but he attended the Quebec conference in 1864 and worked closely with Macdonald who was primarily responsible for bringing the project to fruition. Cockburn also kept a close eye on local issues working in and out of Parliament to get the Marmora Iron Mines in operation with the trans-shipment of iron ore along a spur line to Cobourg Harbour. This helped create business and jobs for the entire region.

When Confederation was finally achieved the first Parliament assembled in November 1867. Prime Minister Macdonald nominated Cockburn to become Speaker of the House of Commons. The only objection came from a Quebec member, Joseph Dufresne, who noted that Cockburn spoke no French while the rules of the new Parliament clearly made both English and French official languages of the new legislature. It was important, he argued, that bilingualism be recognized from the outset. Cartier defended Cockburn pointing out that the new Speaker, although not fluent in French did understand the language. His linguistic limitations and the attitude of certain English Canadian members proved a source of aggravation to Cockburn for many years.

After the 1872 election Macdonald nominated Cockburn for a second term as Speaker, saying that presiding officers should not be changed capriciously at the beginning of each Parliament. His motion was greeted by loud applause from the ministerial benches but a solemn, ominous silence from the opposition who felt Cockburn had been perhaps too favourable to the government in some of his rulings.

During his second term the Pacific Railway scandal was the dominant issue in Parliament. It eventually led to the resignation of the Conservative government. Cockburn himself was defeated, tarred with the same allegations of corruption as the administration. His opponents characterized him as an opportunist and unworthy character for his original conversion to Conservatism after the 1861 election. Cockburn contested a by-election later in 1874 but once again was defeated. Following his double rejection Cockburn left Cobourg to practice law in Ottawa. While continuing to reside in the capital he managed to win back his former seat in 1878 but did not take a very active part in parliamentary debate. He resigned in 1881 to accept appointment as a one-man commission to collect, examine and classify Canadian statutes. Cockburn completed this voluminous task in 1883 preparing the way for a final review by an enlarged commission. He died shortly thereafter at age 64.





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**Timothy Warren Anglin 1874-1878**

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*The term "Speaker" is a misnomer, since by tradition presiding officers in British-style parliamentary institutions give up their right to participate in debate. No Canadian Speaker ever found this convention more irksome than Timothy Anglin. Even allowing for his Irish temperament and the different political mores of his day, Anglin had difficulty with the fundamental requirement of a Speaker — subordination of one's personal political opinions to the more important task of upholding the rights of all members. His years in office were plagued by controversy. He established some dubious precedents being the only Speaker ever unseated for corrupt practices; the only one re-elected to the Chair during the life of a single Parliament; the first Speaker whose nomination was formally opposed by the opposition and the only one ever elected after a recorded division.*

Timothy Warren Anglin was born into quite an affluent family in Clonakilty, Ireland in 1822. The family fortune was devastated by the great potato famine and at age 26 Anglin joined the flood of Irish immigrants to Canada. Shortly after arriving in New Brunswick, he witnessed a scene that reminded him of home. An Orange parade along the main street of Saint John degenerated into a full-scale riot. Anglin felt that such racial strife ought to be left in the old world. He sent a letter on the need for tolerance to the local newspaper.

Anglin said there had been wrongs on both sides but concluded that ultimate responsibility for the disorder resided with local political authorities whose actions and statements seemed insensitive to Catholic feelings. His moderate yet forceful argument appealed to Catholic leaders in the community who were founding a newspaper to represent their viewpoint on public issues. They decided Anglin was just the man to edit the paper. Under his direction circulation of the *Freeman* spread rapidly throughout the province making Anglin an influential figure in New Brunswick politics.

He won a seat in the provincial assembly in 1861. In addition to speaking out on religious and educational issues, Anglin took part in the great debate over Confederation. The very idea appalled him. He saw it as the ruin of the New Brunswick economy and he mocked the

optimism of central Canadians who claimed Confederation would solve everyone's problems. Anglin helped to defeat Leonard Tilley's pro-Confederation government in the 1865 provincial election but within a year the tide had turned and the anti-Confederation forces were out of office, including Anglin who was defeated in his own riding.

This defeat did not keep him from running in the first federal election where he easily won a seat in Parliament. Anglin took a constructive and enthusiastic approach to opposition both in the House and through his newspaper. He had some memorable clashes with D'Arcy McGee, the leading Irish Catholic in the Conservative Party. When the Liberals came to power in 1874, Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie nominated Anglin as Speaker. The choice shocked Macdonald, not because Anglin had been against Confederation but rather because he was still editor of a highly partisan newspaper and had no intention of giving up that position.

Speaker Anglin argued with members or used his ruling on points of procedure to enter debate on controversial matters. His conduct made him unpopular and he soon found himself embroiled in a scandal. It arose from the long-standing government practice of giving Post Office printing contracts to newspapers. The Liberals switched this patronage to their own newspapers with Anglin's *Freeman* receiving \$18,000 during the years 1874 and 1875. The payments ceased in 1876 but the following year the Conservatives introduced a motion condemning the government for entering into a commercial agreement with Anglin, thereby violating the *Independence of Parliament Act*. After debate, in which Speaker Anglin remained silent, the motion was defeated and the matter referred to a Committee on Privilege. Anglin testified that no contract existed. He said he was simply following well-established practice.

Despite its Liberal majority, the Committee rejected his argument and concluded the privileges of the House had been violated. Anglin resigned both his seat and the Speakership but was re-elected in a by-election. Mackenzie renominated him as Speaker although the opposition challenged his eligibility and forced a vote on the question. Mackenzie's choice was upheld. While Anglin's return to the Chair may have saved some personal honour, the dignity of the House and the credibility of the office suffered as a result.

Anglin continued to berate opposition members in the editorials of his newspaper. He even angered the government by speaking in committee against a prohibition bill sponsored by the Liberals. Anglin's term as Speaker ended when the Conservatives returned to power in 1878. Four years later he lost his seat in Parliament whereupon he moved to Toronto to become editor of the *Toronto Tribune*. Anglin never again held public office. He died in Toronto at age 74.





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**Joseph-Godéric Blanchet 1879-1882**

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*Speakers come to office with experience in various parliamentary capacities. They may have served previously as deputy speaker, whip, chairman of committee, parliamentary secretary, cabinet minister or simply as long-time members of the House. Joseph-Godéric Blanchet had the best possible preparation. When elected to the Chair Blanchet had already presided over debates of the Quebec Legislative Assembly for eight years. Thus while usually remembered as the first French-Canadian Speaker, Blanchet also has the unique distinction of being the only person ever to serve as Speaker of both a provincial legislature and the House of Commons.*

A descendant of Pierre Blanchet who settled in Quebec during the 1660s, Joseph-Godéric Blanchet was born in 1829 at St. Pierre, Rivière du Sud. He received an arts education at the Quebec Seminary and at Ste. Anne College before studying medicine with his uncle Dr. Jean Blanchet. Following admission to the medical profession in 1850 Blanchet practiced in Quebec City and St. Nicholas before moving to Lévis where he established a successful career. He acquired such popularity his fellow townsmen elected him mayor on six occasions, the first at age 25.

The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 and the *Trent* crisis in November of that year sent shock waves through British North America stimulating interest in defence of the colony. Blanchet joined the militia in his native province and in 1863 raised the 17th Battalion of Volunteer Infantry which he commanded. He headed the 3rd Administrative Battalion on frontier service at the time of the St. Alban's raid in 1865. During the Fenian raids of 1866 and 1870 he was in command of the active militia force on the south shore of the St. Lawrence.

In politics Blanchet was a Conservative, a supporter of Cartier and Macdonald. He first sought election in 1857 but was defeated. Four years later he won a seat in the Legislative Assembly of the United Province of Canada and sat until Confederation. He supported the new constitution mainly for military reasons, arguing that the defence of British territory against the United States required integrated political

and military institutions. If the North American colonies wanted help from Britain it was imperative for them to take some initiatives.

Under the electoral laws existing in 1867, members were eligible to sit simultaneously in both federal and provincial assemblies. Blanchet represented the people of Lévis in both Quebec City and Ottawa although most of his time was spent in the provincial legislature where he was Speaker. In those days the rules and procedures of the Quebec House were virtually identical to federal ones. His two terms presiding over the tumultuous provincial legislature equipped him to handle any situation likely to arise at the federal level. In 1872 he had the unusual experience of casting the deciding vote on an opposition motion to disqualify members who accepted temporary remunerative positions from the government. Despite the opposition of the ministry Blanchet provided the decisive vote in favour of the amendment.

In Ottawa Blanchet was not a major parliamentary figure although in 1873 Macdonald named him to a five-man committee to investigate charges of corruption in connection with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The committee held several meetings before the law officers of the Crown in Great Britain formally advised that the committee did not have the power to examine witnesses under oath. As a result the investigation was handed over to a Royal Commission.

In 1874 the federal electoral law was changed making it impossible for members to sit in provincial and federal chambers at the same time. Blanchet opted for Quebec where he was still Speaker, however, in the 1875 provincial election he was upset by a 25 year old nationalist, E.T. Paquet. Instead of having two seats Blanchet found himself with none. This political hiatus was short-lived for he returned to the House of Commons in a by-election late in 1875. When the Conservatives came to power three years later Blanchet was elected Speaker.

His term was probably the least eventful of any 19th century Speaker. There were no major scandals, no parliamentary crises and no English-French conflicts. He presided with the confidence that comes from experience. His rulings reflected both a practical and theoretical understanding of procedure. Blanchet was re-elected to the House in 1882. By this time Macdonald had come to the conclusion that the alternation of French and English Speakers was more important than continuity in the office. He did not offer another term. Blanchet sat on the backbenches for a year before being named Collector of Customs for the Port of Quebec. He died in Lévis at age 60.





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**George Airey Kirkpatrick 1883-1887**

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*Canadian parliamentarians of the last century were frequently wealthy, better educated than their constituents and often related to members of the social and business elite. George Airey Kirkpatrick was typical of the political patrician of that era. His father, Thomas, a prominent Kingston lawyer, served as mayor and later sat in Parliament until 1870. George Kirkpatrick was born in Kingston in 1841. He attended Kingston Grammar School, went to high school in Quebec City and completed his education at Trinity College in Dublin. Upon his return to Canada Kirkpatrick joined his father's law office. As a matter of course he associated with the leading men of Kingston including Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. Kirkpatrick was related by marriage to three prominent families: the Maccauleys, the Molsons and the Macphersons.*

**I**n 1870 the local Conservative organization approached Kirkpatrick to contest the Frontenac seat held by his late father. He accepted and at age 29 began his parliamentary career. On most issues Kirkpatrick agreed with the Conservative position. He opposed free trade. He believed in Macdonald's National Policy based on protective tariffs, railway building and immigration. But Kirkpatrick was also a friend of Edward Blake and was not averse to supporting the Liberal leader on certain issues such as proportional representation. During debate over the Pacific Railway scandal Kirkpatrick was courted by Blake and the Liberals. After some hesitation he refused to change political allegiance despite distaste for some actions by his own party.

In 1875 Kirkpatrick introduced a resolution taking issue with the Governor-General's right to pardon Louis Riel without the advice of his ministers. The rules prevented his resolution from being debated but within three years the British Government had issued new instructions to the Governor-General in line with the argument outlined in Kirkpatrick's resolution and in Edward Blake's memorandum on the *Office of Governor-General and the Prerogative of Mercy*.

Kirkpatrick also fought for one of his father's favourite causes: the protection of sailors from shipowners who went bankrupt. Year after year he introduced legislation to authorize liens for seamen's wages. It finally found expression in Blake's *Maritime Court Act* passed in 1877.

Kirkpatrick took a dignified and gentlemanly approach to debate. He rarely delivered long or highly-partisan speeches but made numerous short interventions. He served as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee during the fourth Parliament and after the 1882 election Macdonald nominated him to succeed Blanchet as Speaker. Macdonald praised Blanchet for presiding over the House with great dignity, saying how difficult it had been to find someone equally qualified to hold that important position. Macdonald's logic was too much for Blake who, despite his friendship with Kirkpatrick, chastised Macdonald for changing Speakers unnecessarily.

Kirkpatrick was not overjoyed at being elected Speaker. He would have much preferred a cabinet position but Kingston already had two ministers. In 1885 he told Macdonald his health was deteriorating from a lack of exercise caused by long hours in the chair. The Prime Minister prevailed upon him to remain until the end of the Parliament. Despite a lack of enthusiasm for the job Kirkpatrick was probably the best or, at least, the most impartial of 19th century Speakers. This was due partly to his financial independence but also to his friendship with Blake and other leading Liberals but it worked against his hopes for a cabinet position. In 1888 Macdonald told Kirkpatrick that many Conservatives felt he had been too weak a Speaker, too afraid of Blake and too prone to decide questions against the Conservatives. Kirkpatrick did receive an offer to join Mackenzie Bowell's cabinet in 1896 but by this time he was no longer interested.

After leaving the Chair Kirkpatrick lost much of his earlier interest in public life. He had always been active in industry as president of the Kingston Waterworks, president of the Canadian Locomotive Works, director of the Kingston and Pembroke Railway, the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canada Life Assurance Company, the Imperial Loan and Investment Company and many others. Toward the end of his parliamentary career his interventions dealt mostly with private bills associated with these interests. A year after Macdonald's death his successor, Sir John Abbott, appointed Kirkpatrick Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, a position he held for five years. Kirkpatrick was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1897. His last years were devoted to charitable and community work. He died in Toronto at age 59.





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**Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet 1887-1891**

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*During Canada's early years public-minded men in both English and French Canada thought it an honour and a duty to serve in the Militia. As a young man Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet firmly believed that the Militia was an important institution not only for defence but to foster a feeling of national identity among the population. While this may have been true when it came to fighting the Indians, the Americans or Irish Fenians the use of the Militia, including French-Canadian Regiments, against Louis Riel placed Ouimet and other French-Canadian officers in an extremely difficult position. Their contribution was ridiculed by English Canada and condemned by many of their compatriots in Quebec. Ouimet might have become bitter or disillusioned by this experience. Instead he persevered and went on to a distinguished career as Speaker, cabinet minister and judge.*

Ouimet was born at Ste. Rose, Laval County in 1848. Educated at the Seminary of Ste-Thérèse de Blainville he subsequently studied law in Montreal, then worked briefly as a journalist for *Le Nouveau Monde* and *La Minerve* before being admitted to the Quebec Bar in 1870. His law practice, mostly civil courts, began to prosper and at age 25 Ouimet was elected to the House of Commons as a supporter of the Conservative Government. From the very beginning he made it clear he would represent French-Canadian interests and support no measure he considered detrimental to his race. The first test came in 1874 when he stood up eloquently in favour of a pardon for Louis Riel. The following year the House voted on a motion to declare vacant the seat won by Riel at the last election. Ouimet split with Macdonald to join fifteen other members in opposition to the motion. He again showed an independent attitude in 1882 by voting for a Liberal resolution urging that Canada be empowered to conclude its own commercial treaties without reference to the United Kingdom government.

When the second Riel rebellion broke out in 1885 the Minister of Militia, Adolphe Caron, wanted French-Canadians to have a prominent role in the force organized to fight the rebels. He asked Ouimet as commander of the 65th Montreal Regiment to find volunteers to go to the Northwest. Within three days Ouimet had nearly three hundred men

ready to serve. Enthusiasm was high and tens of thousands of supporters flocked to the railway station to see them off. Ouimet's Regiment proceeded to the Northwest where it joined the Alberta Field Force under command of a retired British Officer, Thomas Bland Strange. The Force was charged with outflanking the rebels and keeping the rebellion from spreading to the warlike Plains Indian tribes in Alberta. In Calgary Ouimet quickly ran into difficulties with Strange who saw no merit in his suggestion to negotiate safe passage to Edmonton with the Catholic Bishop in the area.

Ouimet received permission to return to Ottawa to attend Parliament and to try to obtain supplies that had been delayed or lost. His appearance in the east caused a sensation among Toronto newspapers some of whom accused him of desertion. Ouimet was ordered back to Calgary but by the time he arrived his regiment had left. Crossing the prairies on horseback with only two Indian guides Ouimet finally rejoined the 65th in Edmonton. General Strange soon left to pursue Big Bear and the Crees who had been responsible for the Frog Lake massacre. Ouimet was placed in command of Fort Edmonton where he immediately won the loyalty of the Métis by giving them arms and assigning them duties previously carried out by the English settlers.

When the uprising ended Ouimet returned to Ottawa. Although he had volunteered to fight the rebels, Ouimet opposed Riel's execution. When Riel was finally hanged a mob of French-Canadians gathered in front of Ouimet's house in Montreal to denounce him for helping to put down the rebellion. Ouimet realized the execution would be disastrous for the Conservatives in Quebec and he supported a Liberal motion to censure the government. After the election of 1887, in which the usual partisanship was intensified by debate over the Riel affair, Ouimet was nominated by Macdonald as Speaker of the House of Commons. The appointment was welcomed by Blake and the Liberals who saw it as a vindication of their position on Riel.

After one term in the chair Ouimet returned to the backbenches but not for long. A scandal in the Public Works Department led to the resignation of Hector Langevin. Ouimet took over the portfolio thus becoming a senior Quebec Minister. From 1891 to 1896 he was an influential figure in the succession of cabinets that followed Macdonald's death. Appointed to the bench before the 1896 election, Ouimet held judicial office until his death in Montreal at age 67.





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**Peter White 1891-1896**

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*Pioneer life was hard but not without its rewards, particularly for those fortunate enough to choose a homestead which eventually developed into a village or town. Even more fortunate were the descendants of such settlers for they inherited the fruits of their ancestors' foresight. Such was the case of Peter White. His father, also named Peter, was born in Edinburgh, went to sea at age 14 and later joined Commodore James Yeo to fight against the Americans during the War of 1812. At the end of hostilities White remained in Canada and found work lumbering along the Ottawa River. In 1828 he cleared the land and erected a log cabin at the junction of the Muskrat and Ottawa rivers. Other settlers soon followed and the village of Pembroke was established. White became a businessman owning a blacksmith's shop, a general store, a lumberyard and other enterprises.*

Speaker Peter White was born in 1838 at Pembroke. He left school before his thirteenth birthday in order to gain experience working in Ottawa. In 1858 Peter and his older brother Andrew took over their father's lumber business which they developed into a most successful enterprise employing more than fifty men. They sold material needed for the booming railway and shipbuilding industries of Ontario, Quebec and the northern United States. Peter White became one of the wealthiest men in the area. He was a shareholder and president of one of the country's first commercial lighting plants, the Pembroke Electric Light Company.

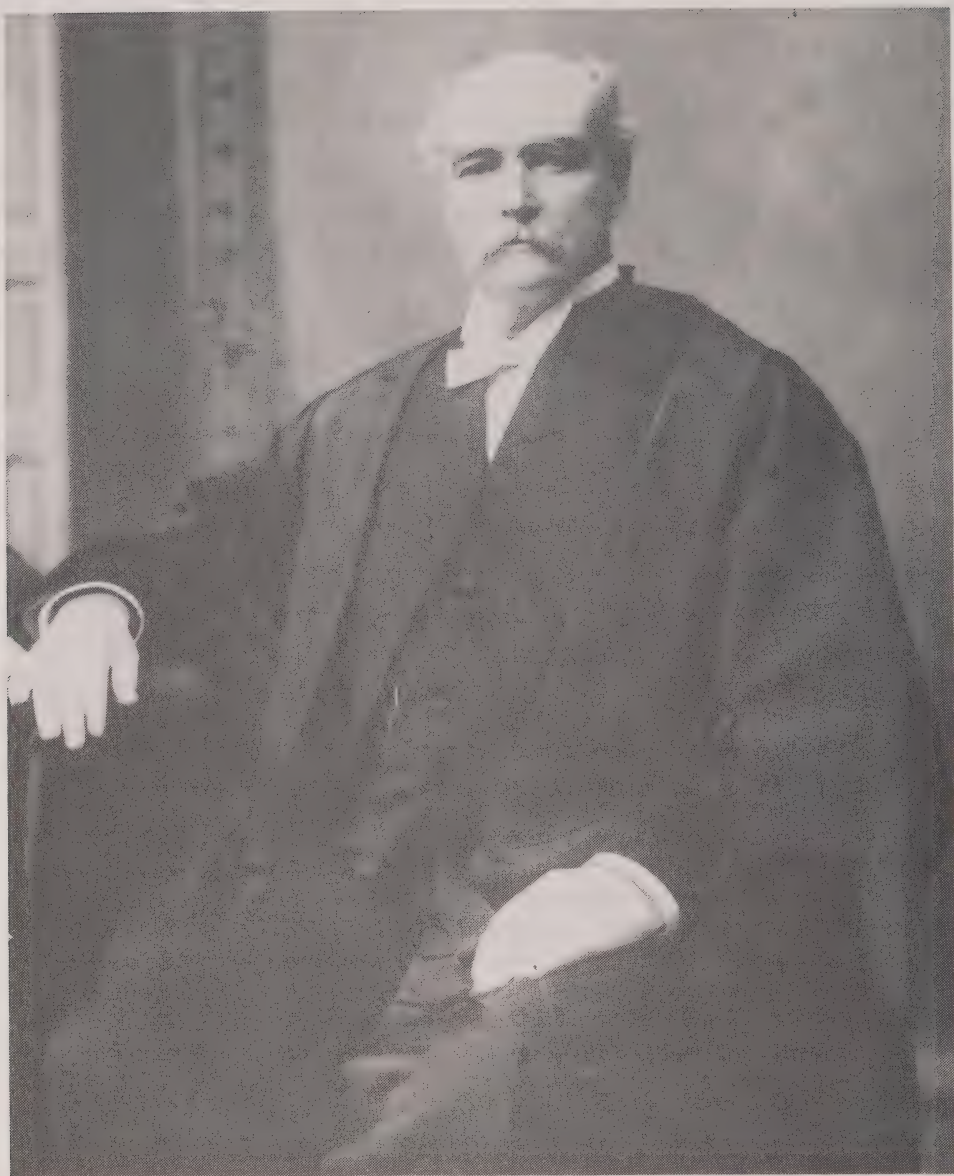
His first attempt at politics was at the municipal level; he was elected reeve of the township in 1870. He ran for Parliament in 1872 but was defeated. Two years later he was elected only to be unseated following a petition by his opponent who complained of unfair electoral practices. White tried to regain his seat in the resulting by-election but again was defeated. Finally, in 1876 White was once more elected to Parliament and retained his seat during the next four general elections. An enthusiastic supporter of Macdonald's National Policy. White served for years as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Immigration.

White was the fifth and last Speaker nominated by Macdonald. By this time it was a ritual for the Liberals to chide Sir John for not keeping his word about following British practice of continuity in the Speakership. Wilfrid Laurier supported White's nomination but suggested Conservative loyalty to British principles was something that glowed at election time but was put under a bushel after the votes were counted. Not only was Ouimet not asked to continue as Speaker but the Deputy Speaker from the last Parliament had also been ignored. Macdonald was not entirely to blame, however, for on at least two occasions he had asked White to serve as Deputy Speaker. The independent-minded White always refused in hopes of obtaining a cabinet position.

Like many English-Canadian parliamentarians of his era White was not conversant with French although this limitation did not greatly bother him. In 1893 Louis Phillippe Brodeur, himself a future Speaker, switched to French during discussion of a point of order. Speaker White noted that he was unable to understand the argument but asked Brodeur to please confine himself as much as possible to the rules of the House.

White presided over the debates resulting from the Manitoba legislation which abolished Roman Catholic separate schools in that province. As Speaker he kept silent on this highly explosive issue. During the 1896 election, however, he rejected the Conservative policy which would have compelled the province to re-establish Catholic education rights. White thought no federal legislation on a question so clearly a provincial responsibility could be forced on an unwilling people. That was basically the position of Laurier and the Liberals who formed the government after the election. Despite White's dissociation from Conservative policy, he was defeated in his own riding. Determined to get back to the House, White contested a by-election in 1899 and the general election of 1900, both of which he lost. In 1904 he finally regained his seat but by this time his health was failing. He rarely participated in debates or even attended meetings of the House. White died at age 67 in Clifton Springs, New York, where he had gone for medical treatment.





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**James David Edgar 1896-1899**

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*The men attracted to public life during the first generation after Confederation were of a very high calibre. Perhaps the most remarkable never to make it to the cabinet was James David Edgar. While still in his twenties Edgar was a brilliant law student, legal editor of the Globe, author of essays on bankruptcy, contracts and real estate, alderman for the city of Toronto and organizer for the Liberal Party in Ontario. He also had wide literary and artistic interests. His sympathetic understanding of French Canada was rarely found among Ontario politicians in the last decades of the nineteenth century.*

**J**.D. Edgar was born in Hatley in the Eastern Townships in 1841. He was a descendant of the Edgars of Keithock, Forfarshire in Scotland. Educated at Lennoxville Grammar School and private schools in Quebec City and Georgetown, Ontario, Edgar spent most of his adult life in Toronto. He studied law and was called to the Bar of Upper Canada in 1864. Two years later he won a seat on Toronto City Council as alderman for St. George's ward. After working behind the scenes on behalf of George Brown and the Reform Party, Edgar ran in the 1871 Ontario election. He lost by a mere four votes but the next year succeeded in winning a seat in the House of Commons.

The Liberal leader, Alexander Mackenzie, appointed him whip and Edgar played a key role in forcing the resignation of the Conservative government over the Pacific Railway scandal. Despite the Liberal victory in the ensuing election Edgar was defeated in his own riding. He did not return to Parliament for more than a decade although he sought election on four different occasions always losing by small margins, once by five votes. Shortly after forming the government the Liberals called upon Edgar to visit British Columbia in order to discuss an extension of the time limit for completion of the railway promised as a condition of that province's entry into Confederation. After several weeks negotiation British Columbia balked at any changes and even questioned Edgar's authority to act on behalf of Ottawa.

While Edgar failed in his immediate task the settlement finally reached was very close to what he had proposed. Edgar also learned a great deal about the railway business. On returning to Toronto he formed a railway company of his own. He proposed to build a line to

open up new lands in the Muskoka area joining Toronto with the eastern terminus of the Transcontinental Railway at Lake Nipissing. Edgar tried to gain federal and provincial support for the project but other companies were interested in the same route and eventually he lost out to the Grand Trunk. If nothing else Edgar's fling as a promoter helped him as railway critic following his return to the House of Commons in an 1884 by-election.

During the 1880s Edgar became a highly influential Ontario Liberal. One of the first public men to denounce the Protestant Protective Association, he attacked the PPA for its bigotry, intolerance and secretiveness while at the same time pointing out that the province was in no danger of a Roman Catholic takeover as maintained by the PPA. Edgar maintained no good could come to his party or the country from adopting the extreme anti-French, anti-Catholic views advocated by many of his contemporaries. Instead he argued for the development of a true national identity based on Canada's two major cultural and linguistic groups.

Edgar also played a major role in defining the position of the Liberal Party with regard to Great Britain. He had no sympathy for either imperial federation or annexation by the United States, arguing instead for the gradual extension of Canadian autonomy beginning with the assumption of complete control over commercial relations. Edgar was one of the party's leading spokesman for reciprocity with the United States whereby the two nations would impose separate tariffs against European goods with free trade on merchandise of North American origin.

Despite his services to the party Edgar was excluded from Laurier's Cabinet after the 1896 election. Instead he was nominated as Speaker and the opposition could find little fault with the choice. The question of continuity never arose since Speaker White had been defeated and Sir Charles Tupper acknowledged it was perfectly natural for the party in power to select a Speaker from its own ranks. Tupper added, however, that he regretted Laurier had not seen fit to respect the practice of alternating the Speakership between French and English Canadians.

In addition to Edgar's entrepreneurial and political interests he was a frequent contributor to legal and literary reviews of his day. He published a volume of poetry in 1893 and even won a contest for Canadian national songs with his work "This Canada of Ours". President of the Ontario Literary Society, a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Edgar was knighted by Queen Victoria. He was in poor health when he accepted the Speakership and died three years later at age 57.





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**Thomas Bain 1899-1900**

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*The Speakership is surrounded by ceremonies and procedures designed to isolate and exalt the office and to command respect from parliamentarians and outsiders alike. Under such circumstances it can be difficult for some men to remain humble or to retain the common touch essential to the office. This was never a problem for Thomas Bain. An extremely shy, modest man before becoming Speaker, Bain retained these characteristics during and after his term. He never considered himself an important or distinguished figure and was so loath to talk about himself that almost nothing is known about his life or career. He felt he had led an uneventful life of which there was little to be said.*

**B**ain was born at Denny, Stirlingshire, Scotland in 1834. Three years later his father sold the family farm and brought his wife and young son to Canada. They arrived in Montreal, proceeded by boat to Toronto, and eventually settled on a one hundred acre bush farm in the Township of West Flamboro in Wentworth County. As a youth Thomas Bain knew the hard life of a farmer's son and the limited educational opportunities of a rural upbringing. His education was supplemented by his father who encouraged him to read works of the best English authors. This may have accounted for his crisp speaking style which made his speeches concise and to the point.

Bain's political career began when he was elected to the County Council in the 1860s. He later became Warden for Wentworth County and was nominated by the Liberals to run in the 1872 general election. He represented the electors of Wentworth for the next 28 years winning seven consecutive elections before retiring in 1900. Aside from the period he was Speaker, Bain's entire career was spent on the backbenches where he spoke most frequently about agricultural matters. When the Liberals came to power in 1896 Bain became Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Colonization.

In those days committees were not particularly active but Bain took the job seriously. Under his direction the committee studied problems of cold storage transportation to aid the export of perishable products. It looked at problems of freight rail discrimination, and the possibility of modifying quarantine regulations to facilitate the import of

thoroughbred horses and cattle. Farmers were also upset about an American regulation that required them to register stock in the United States in order to ship it to England. The committee called on the Minister of Agriculture to negotiate a change in this regulation.

Under ordinary circumstances Bain would never have become Speaker, but the death of J.D. Edgar in August 1899 presented Laurier with a difficult problem. According to a convention that was gradually being established it would seem Edgar should have been replaced by a French-speaking member. In fact the deputy Speaker, L.P. Brodeur, was the obvious choice. However, there was also a French-Canadian Speaker of the Senate and a French-Canadian Prime Minister, so Laurier decided to choose an English-Canadian to finish Edgar's term. As one of the oldest and most experienced Members in the House Bain was a natural choice to preside over the final session of the eighth Parliament. In keeping with Bain's personality both nomination and acceptance speeches were the briefest and simplest on record.

His election was noteworthy for a number of other reasons. He was the first and only farmer ever to hold the position of Speaker, the first to serve only a partial term and the first whose nomination was accepted by the opposition without complaint, criticism or negative comment of any kind. Bain spoke no French but unlike some of his predecessors he recognized the undesirability of having a unilingual presiding officer in a bilingual assembly. In a speech to his constituents shortly after his election as Speaker, Bain noted how French was falling into disuse because most French-speaking members understood English, while few English members understood French.

After Bain left Parliament his time was devoted largely to two business enterprises of which he was president, the Landed Banking and Loan Company and the Malcolm and Souter Furniture Company. Bain was offered an appointment as Commissioner of the Temiskaming and Northern Railway in 1902 but he declined. He died in Dundas at age 81.





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**Louis-Phillippe Brodeur 1901-1904**

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*Louis-Phillippe Brodeur's public career extended over thirty years during which he was a Member of Parliament, Speaker of the House of Commons, cabinet minister, justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and finally Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. An ardent Liberal his public life was devoted to Laurier, the British Empire, his province and his country. Although his father had fought in the 1837 rebellion and his maternal grandfather, also a rebel, was killed at the battle of St. Charles, Brodeur spoke frequently about patriotism and French-Canadian loyalty to the Crown. The rebellion, he maintained, was not directed against the Crown but against colonial mismanagement by British authorities.*

**B**orn in 1862 at Beloeil along the Richelieu River in the County of Rouville, Brodeur went to the Seminary of St. Hyacinthe. He then moved to Montreal where he enrolled in law. Before being admitted to the Bar Brodeur devoted much of his time and energy to political journalism writing for *La Patrie*, *L'Électeur* and becoming editor of the Liberal newspaper *Le Soir*. At age 29 he was elected to the House of Commons where he sat in opposition until the Liberal victory of 1896.

After the change in government Brodeur was not offered a cabinet post immediately, as there were many Quebec Liberals with greater claims. Instead, Laurier asked him to serve as Deputy Speaker. Following the 1900 election Brodeur became the first deputy to move up to the Speakership. He still yearned for a more active political role and in January 1904 Laurier obliged by naming him Minister of Inland Revenue. Brodeur introduced anti-trust legislation to protect tobacco growers from the American Tobacco Company monopoly which made storekeepers sign contracts to handle only their tobacco products.

In 1906 Brodeur was given the more important Marine and Fisheries portfolio. Under his administration the Montreal Harbours Commission was organized and major improvements were made to navigation in the St. Lawrence. For years Marine and Fisheries had been a key portfolio for dispensing political patronage and successive ministers were accused of graft and corruption. In 1908 the government established a Royal Commission under Justice W.G.P. Cassels to examine the affairs

of the department. His report noted with some satisfaction the reforms Brodeur had inaugurated.

Gradually Laurier gave Brodeur more and more responsibility for international matters. He attended the 1907 Imperial Conference in London. From there he and W.S. Fielding went to Paris where they negotiated and signed a commercial agreement with France. In 1909 Brodeur represented Canada at the Imperial Defence Conference which discussed naval policy for the Empire. Brodeur took the traditional Liberal position against direct financial contributions to a British controlled navy, adding that Canada was more interested in having its own navy. Legislation to this effect was introduced by Laurier in January 1910.

By 1911 the Canadian Navy consisted of 233 men and two cruisers, one on the Atlantic Coast and one on the Pacific. The naval issue eventually contributed to the downfall of the Laurier administration. Many English-Canadians preferred the Conservative policy of direct contributions to the Imperial Navy while French-Canadians thought that even this minuscule navy was likely to drag Canada into Britain's wars.

The naval controversy contributed to Brodeur's retirement for health reasons. In 1911 Laurier appointed him to the Supreme Court and during his years on the bench Brodeur gained a reputation as a careful and painstaking jurist. Ill health again forced his retirement in 1923 but in October of that year he was sworn into a less onerous position as Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. This was to have been the crowning jewel in a remarkable public career but he had little opportunity to enjoy the position. He died in Quebec City on New Year's Day 1924 at age 61.





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**Napoléon-Antoine Belcourt 1904**

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*Election to the Speakership marks the culmination of some public careers but for others it is only a step toward more lasting fame as cabinet minister, judge, diplomat or even Governor-General. Napoléon-Antoine Belcourt had the shortest term of any Speaker since Confederation — less than seven months from March 1904 until the dissolution of the ninth Parliament in September of that year. It was only after his appointment to the Senate in 1907 that his activities on behalf of French language rights in Ontario made him one of the best known politicians in Ontario.*

**A**lthough born in Toronto in 1860, Belcourt came from an old French-Canadian family. Raised in Three Rivers he received his early education at St. Joseph's Seminary. Belcourt studied law at Laval University and in 1882 went into practice in Montreal. Two years later he moved to Ottawa where he became one of the few lawyers practicing in both Ontario and Quebec. He joined the law faculty of Ottawa University in 1891 and from 1894-1896 served as Crown Attorney for Charlatan County. For many years Belcourt owned a newspaper, *Le Temps*, which supported Laurier and the Liberals.

Belcourt first ran for the House of Commons as a Liberal in 1891 but was defeated. He remained active in the party and in 1896 was elected to the House of Commons for Ottawa. He did not make an immediate impact but never missed an opportunity to speak out in favour of French Canada or the Franco-Ontarian community. In 1901 he visited the Colonial Institute in London where he attended a lecture by a British authority who described some of the quaint customs and habits of the French speaking *habitant* in Canada. Belcourt replied with a spontaneous and passionate lecture on French-Canadian history, literature, culture and the role of French-Canadians in the political and parliamentary development of the nation. His entire adult life was dedicated to making French Canada better understood in Canada and abroad.

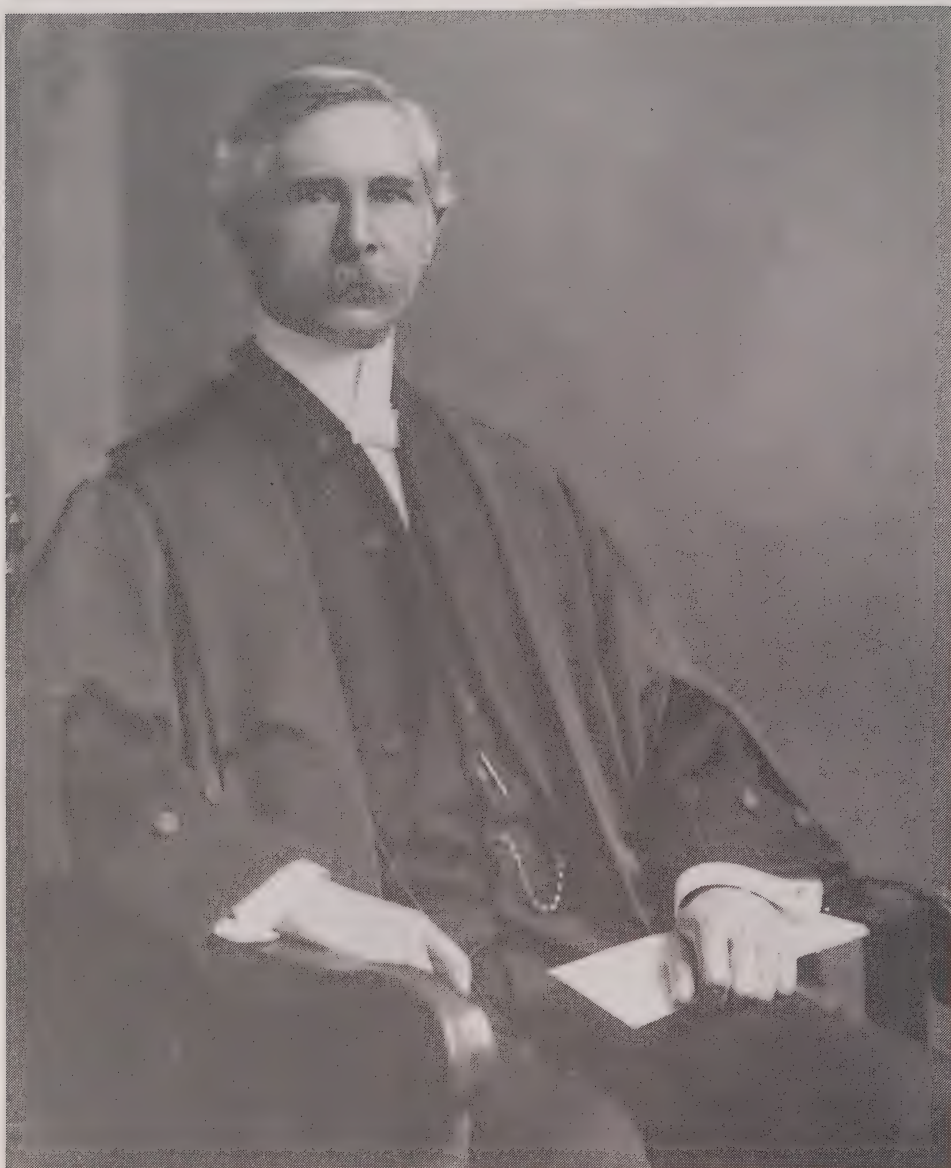
A leader of the movement for bilingual separate schools in Ontario, Senator Belcourt presided over the first Congress of Franco-Ontarians held in 1910 to plan strategy in view of the Ontario government's policy of discouraging the use of French in schools. In June 1912 Regulation 17 of the Ontario Department of Education proposed to restrict severely the use of French as a language of instruction in both public and

Catholic schools. This raised a storm of protest as some seven thousand people demonstrated in Ottawa. Potential riot situations developed as armed police confronted mothers armed with hatpins.

Belcourt acted as spokesman for the protestors although he insisted they use political and legal means to pursue their grievances. He personally argued against Regulation 17 in the Supreme Court of Ontario in 1914 but lost. He argued it again before the court of last appeal, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, claiming Regulation 17 was not only beyond the power of a provincial legislature but that it violated natural law by taking away the individual's right to have the money he paid in school taxes applied in accordance with his wishes. He said the Regulation attempted to deprive citizens of the use of their native tongue and parents of their right to choose the language of instruction for their children. For all these reasons Belcourt asked the court to declare the Regulation invalid. The court rejected his arguments but as a result of the protests by Belcourt and others Regulation 17 was never fully implemented.

Another area of interest to Belcourt was international affairs. As early as 1906 he spoke in the House of Commons in favour of enlarging the *Entente Cordiale* to include the United States and Japan. Once again, however, it was in the Senate that he really made his mark. In 1924 Belcourt was made Minister Plenipotentiary to the Interallied Conference in London. In 1925 he presided over the meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union which was held in Ottawa. He was in frequent demand as a writer or commentator on international, legal and constitutional questions. Belcourt died at his cottage at Blue Sea Lake near Ottawa at the age of 71.





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**Robert Franklin Sutherland 1905-1908**

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*The qualities required of a Speaker are not unlike those needed in a referee, umpire or judge. Impartiality, independence, fair-mindedness, firmness, dignity and common sense are absolute prerequisites for the job. Few Speakers have had a temperament so ideally suited for the Speakership as Robert Franklin Sutherland. His subsequent career on the bench confirmed his natural abilities as a mediator and arbitrator.*

**B**orn in Newmarket, Ontario in 1859 of Scottish and Irish parents, Sutherland was raised in Windsor where he completed his secondary education. A graduate of the Universities of Toronto and Western Ontario, Sutherland was admitted to the Bar in 1886 and began a law practice in Windsor. He served on city council and ran unsuccessfully for mayor before winning the Liberal nomination in North Essex for the 1900 federal election. His political career almost came to a premature end as a result of charges of membership in the Protestant Protective Association.

His opponent produced a PPA card with Sutherland's signature on it. Sutherland claimed it was a forgery although he did admit to attending one meeting in order to inform himself about the objectives of the Association. When he learned of its strident anti-Catholic views Sutherland refused to have anything to do with it. The electoral campaign was marked by more than the usual amount of mud-slinging but Sutherland emerged victorious in a riding with a significant number of French-Canadian and Catholic residents.

In the House of Commons Sutherland made comparatively few speeches although he occasionally intervened in areas of transportation, immigration or defence. In looking after the interests of his riding he best displayed his energy and influence. By the end of his first term Sutherland claimed credit for persuading the government to abolish the closed season for whitefish on the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair, for improving the post office and inland revenue facilities in his riding and for establishing a poultry-fattening station at Sandwich where farmers could obtain information and advice about how to increase their productivity. He also secured numerous grants for improvements to piers and for dredging.

When Sutherland was re-elected in 1904 he had learned enough French to be able to deliver a few campaign speeches in that language.

When elected Speaker he became the first anglophone presiding officer to give part of his acceptance speech in French. An avid reader, Sutherland could lecture the Ottawa Literary Society on Scottish character as illustrated in the works of Robert Louis Stevenson or speak out on constitutional and political matters. In the latter case he tried to limit his remarks to providing information rather than persuading his audience of policies closer to one party or another. Coming from Windsor he was better known in the United States than most Canadian Speakers and he received invitations to speak in various American cities, usually on the subject of reciprocity or Canadian-American relations.

Sutherland did such a fine job as Speaker that Laurier wanted him to serve a second term after the 1908 election. In declining the offer Sutherland suggested that the status and authority of the Speaker be increased to make it a more attractive position. In October 1909 Sutherland was named to the High Court of Ontario. He became one of the most respected judges in the province, serving frequently as chairman of conciliation boards during labour disputes. He was even asked to settle a quarrel between two factions of a Presbyterian congregation in Toronto.

His most difficult task, however, was as chairman of an Ontario Royal Commission to investigate the practicality and desirability of establishing a network of radial railways in the province. The inquiry took more than a year. Many briefs were presented of a highly technical nature. The report of the commission was ultimately unfavourable to the scheme, a decision which prompted much criticism of Judge Sutherland by the powerful business interests promoting the idea. Sutherland died while still a judge in Toronto at age 63.





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**Charles Marcil 1909-1911**

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*On every issue a Member of Parliament must take into account his responsibility to his party, to his electors, to the country as a whole as well as to his own conscience. Each member decides for himself what priority to give each. Charles Marcil made no apology for thinking that his first duty was to his constituents. The voters of Bonaventure in the Gaspé Peninsula responded by returning him to Ottawa in ten consecutive elections. Thirty-seven years in the House was not a record, although few men have served so long without attaining a cabinet position. The closest Marcil came to an executive position was before the 1911 election when Laurier asked if he was interested in becoming Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. Marcil declined, saying he could ill afford the expenses associated with such a position.*

**M**arcil was born at Ste. Scholastique on July 1, 1860. His mother was Irish; his father traced his ancestry back eight generations to André Marcil who settled near Quebec City around 1670. Charles Marcil had to leave school prematurely following the death of his father. To support his mother and younger brothers and sisters Marcil took a variety of jobs. He was hired as reporter for the *Montreal Gazette* in 1880 and for the next twenty years worked as a journalist for several Montreal newspapers. At one time he covered the Quebec legislature and became interested in provincial politics, running unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate in the 1897 election. Three years later he was elected to the House of Commons. He never lost another election.

Marcil's electoral success is easy to explain. He was highly adept at obtaining funds for projects of all kinds. In 1904 his campaign literature claimed responsibility for projects worth the then staggering total of \$609,438. These included new wharfs, bridges, lighthouses and even a \$60,000 ferry boat to operate between Campbellton and Gaspé. This ability to obtain favours for his constituents almost cost him his chance at the Speakership.

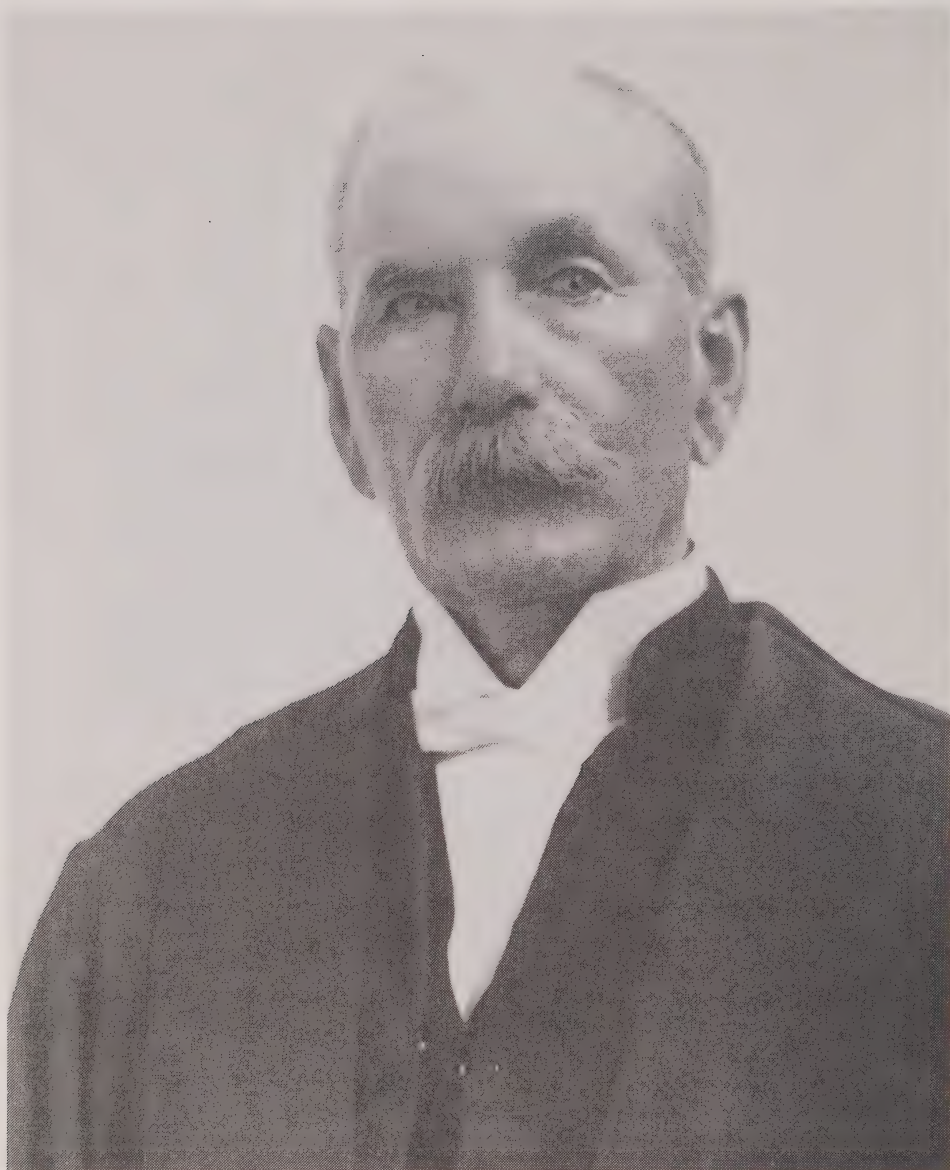
After the 1908 election Laurier nominated Marcil as Speaker. Some Ontario Conservatives tried to make an issue of the Liberal Party's propensity for using public money to entice the electorate. They felt

Marcil epitomized this practice. On the other hand Quebecers in the Conservative caucus felt there was more to the attack on Marcil than his ability to acquire government largesse. They opposed any move to deny him the Speakership. The Conservative leader, Robert Borden, took a position between the two factions of his caucus. He admitted Marcil's record as Deputy Speaker in the last Parliament was beyond reproach. He also pointed out how unseemly it was for the person going to be Speaker to be indebted to ministers for favours granted to constituents. In the end the usual practice was followed of electing the Speaker unanimously.

As Speaker Marcil made up for his lack of formal education and legal training by his sunny personality and easygoing manner. Previously known to all as "Charlie", he had no desire to become less approachable except when actually in the Chair. Marcil's speakership ended when the Liberals lost the 1911 election. He found the transition to the opposition backbenches difficult but soon found a new outlet for his energy in municipal politics. Without giving up his seat in the House, Marcil was elected to Montreal's city council as alderman for Notre Dame de Grace in 1918. He subsequently became a member of the commission appointed to administer civil affairs until a new system of municipal government was introduced in 1921. When the Liberals returned to power under Mackenzie King, Marcil was named chairman of caucus, a position he held for nearly ten years.

While primarily a constituency man, Charlie Marcil could always be counted on for a good Liberal speech on reciprocity with the United States, the use of French in Ontario, conscription, the tariff or any number of other subjects. Occasionally a matter of conscience arose where he took a position well beyond that of the party. For example in 1923 he demanded Canada expel the Mexican Consul to protest alleged discrimination against the Catholic Church in Mexico. But while he could be a party man, or a man of conscience it was fitting that his last intervention in Parliament was to congratulate the Minister of Railways for re-establishing CNR repair shops and terminals in New Carlisle, Gaspé and other areas in his constituency. Marcil died in Ottawa at age 76.





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**Thomas Simpson Sproule 1911-1915**

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*The Loyal Orange Order was founded to perpetuate the memory of the Glorious Revolution and the Battle of the Boyne, events which helped to secure Protestant succession to the English Throne. In Canada during the last century the Order was supposed to symbolize the defence of Protestant Christianity and the unity of the British Empire. In fact it was better known for its anti-Catholic and anti-French positions, particularly on educational issues. Thomas Sproule was no ordinary member of the Orange Order. For five years he was Most Worshipful Master and Sovereign. In 1906 he became President of the Imperial Grand Orange Council of the World. His loyalty to Orangism was greater than to his own party as demonstrated by his refusal to support Conservative policy during the Manitoba schools crisis of the 1890s.*

Sproule was born in 1843 on a farm near Maxwell, Ontario, seven years after his father emigrated from the county of Tyrone in Ireland. As a youngster Sproule helped to clear the land, build fences and look after a herd of cattle. After attending school in Grey County he went to the University of Michigan. He then worked for a few years before deciding to enrol in medicine in Toronto. Upon graduation he opened an office in Markdale, Ontario and soon had patients all over the county. Sproule also owned a retail drug store and had investments in a flour mill, a lumberyard and other commercial enterprises. He maintained a large farm where he raised thoroughbred Shorthorn cattle.

In 1878 Sproule was elected to the House of Commons as a Conservative. He supported John A. Macdonald except on language and religious issues. In 1890 the Legislature of Manitoba abolished the old system of education with its separate Protestant and Catholic sections. This set off a series of political and legal battles which came to a head in 1896 when the Conservative Government introduced remedial legislation to re-establish publicly supported Catholic schools. Sproule told the House of Commons he could not in conscience abide by that policy. He helped the Liberals delay the bill until an election had to be called. Sproule maintained his seat during the Conservative debacle of 1896. Eventually he returned to the good graces of the party, becoming a harsh critic of Laurier's immigration policies which he said made

Canada the dumping ground for the refuse of every country in the world. Sproule also supported the abolition of French as a language of instruction in Ontario schools. In 1903 he spoke out against expanding the use of French in the federal administration.

After Laurier was defeated in 1911 the new Prime Minister, Robert Borden, nominated Sproule to be Speaker. Considering some of Sproule's past statements, Laurier made an admirably restrained speech which expressed surprise at the choice. He never mentioned Sproule's membership in the Orange Order or denied that he would make a conscientious Speaker. Laurier said Sproule represented the quintessence of Toryism but hoped that would be left behind when he moved into the Chair. Thus at age 68 and in ill-health Sproule took on the onerous role of presiding officer.

During his many years in Ottawa Sproule had learned no French, however, as Speaker he thought he should learn at least enough to allow him to read prayers twice a week in that language. He engaged a French teacher to spell out the prayers phonetically. Unfortunately Sproule could not distinguish the French sounds *au*, *eau* and *eu*. His rendition of the Lord's Prayer is said to have greatly surprised French-speaking members as he pronounced the word for "heaven" to sound like the word for "bucket".

As it turned out language was the least of Sproule's problems. In 1913 he presided over a marathon debate on the Conservative naval bill. For thirty-six days the House debated the bill. Passions ran high; some members were barely on speaking terms. There was no closure rule in those days and at one point the House sat around the clock for two weeks excluding Sundays and a two-hour recess for dinner. Never a patient man, Sproule found the proceedings reprehensible. It is not surprising that he became the first Speaker to impose the ultimate sanction of "naming" a member for disorderly conduct.

Sproule's health continued to deteriorate and in December 1915 Borden named him to the Senate. Two years later he died in Markdale at age 74.





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**Albert Sévigny 1916-1917**

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*The dominant force in federal politics in Quebec since 1896 has been the Liberal Party. At times Social Credit or other parties have made inroads but by and large the careers of French-Canadian Conservative members have been short. Albert Sévigny is a case in point. In politics, as in many walks of life, there are great pressures to conform. Promotions and material rewards go most frequently to those who follow the crowd. The man willing to disagree with his party, or like Albert Sévigny, to defy the will of a majority in his community is rare. His political career was cut short by support for conscription.*

Sévigny was born in Tingwick in the parish of Saint Patrice d'Arthabaska. He studied at the Seminaries of Nicolet and Valleyfield as well as at Laval University where he graduated in law. In 1905 he opened a law practice in Quebec City and two years later was Conservative candidate in a provincial by-election. Following his defeat Sévigny became more interested in the Nationalist movement headed by Henri Bourassa. The Nationalists opposed the Liberal policy of building a Canadian navy for they feared it would involve Canada in wars without having any say over British diplomatic policies. During the 1911 election an informal electoral alliance was established between Conservative and Nationalist candidates in Quebec. When the results had been counted this alliance had won 27 seats including Albert Sévigny's in Dorchester. But the Nationalist dream of holding a balance of power did not materialize as the Conservatives won enough seats in the rest of the country to form a government without Nationalist support.

After the election Sévigny and other Nationalists moderated their views, and joined the Conservatives. By 1914 he wholeheartedly supported the Canadian war effort. Sévigny was named deputy Speaker in 1915 and a year later, at age 34, became Speaker when Thomas Sproule was appointed to the Senate. Laurier could not refrain from commenting on Sévigny's change of attitude since the election. He also pointed out the irony of a Nationalist like Sévigny succeeding an Orangeman like Sproule in the Speaker's chair.

As the war progressed Borden felt compulsory service was necessary. He asked Sévigny to join the cabinet to try to convince his fellow

Quebecers of the urgency of the situation. In those days members who accepted a portfolio automatically vacated their seats and had to run in by-elections. His opponent was Lucien Cannon, one of the Liberals' best campaigners who resigned a seat in the provincial assembly to oppose Sévigny. The battle was bitter with the prospect of conscription on everyone's mind. Both parties threw their full strength into the by-election. Great crowds followed the speakers and the electors were treated to rousing debates. Sévigny emerged victorious by 274 votes which he claimed showed there was support in Quebec for a military draft.

In June 1917 Borden introduced conscription. Among French speaking members only Sévigny and two others voted in favour of the bill. Laurier immediately called for their resignation. In December a general election was held. Again conscription was the dominant issue but this time Sévigny was defeated in both Dorchester and Westmount-St. Henri. Not a single French-speaking Conservative was elected in Quebec. Exhausted and disappointed Sévigny resigned as Minister and returned to his law practice in Quebec City. His letter of resignation praised Borden for his efforts to keep the country together and blamed Laurier for the division and bitterness caused by the conscription issue.

Sévigny's stand on the conscription issue had cost him his political career. In 1921 the Conservatives appointed him to the Superior Court of Quebec, where he served for 39 years becoming Associate Chief Justice in 1933 and Chief Justice in 1942. He continued to take an interest in public affairs but his opinions still set him apart from the majority of his fellow citizens. For example in an address to the Quebec Bar in September 1943 Sévigny criticized the traditional education system in Quebec saying the lack of emphasis on commerce, engineering and scientific training kept French-Canadians from playing as important a role as they should have in control of their own society. He called for a study of educational systems used in the United States and in other Canadian provinces. His remarks, which set off a lively controversy in the newspapers, anticipated by about twenty years the policy of educational reform undertaken during the 1960s.

Judge Sévigny remained on the bench until ill-health forced his retirement in March 1961. Two months later he died in Quebec City at age 80.





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**Edgar Nelson Rhodes 1917-1921**

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*The present Parliament building, which replaced one destroyed by fire in 1916, was constructed while Rhodes was Speaker. Many of his suggestions were incorporated in the design. For example to be certain the new building would have sufficient room for a British-style Speaker's procession he made sure the corridor leading from the Speaker's quarters to the Chamber was enlarged. He also asked for a separate entrance for the Speaker at the West side of the building. Outside this entrance the parliamentary stone-carvers, who by tradition do not sculpt images of real people, chiselled his caricature in the form of a gargoyle replete with large nose and pince-nez glasses.*

**O**f Scottish-Irish ancestry Rhodes was born in Amherst in 1877, the son of a Nova Scotian businessman. He was educated at Amherst Academy, Horton Academy, Acadian University and Dalhousie University. He received a law degree in 1902. An ardent sportsman throughout his life, Rhodes was a star rugby player at both Acadia and Dalhousie. In later life he became an avid golfer, fisherman and tennis player. After establishing a successful law practice in Amherst, Rhodes ran for the House of Commons as a Conservative in 1908. The riding of Cumberland had been a Liberal stronghold since 1896 and his opponent, J.L. Ralston, was one of the bright young men of the Liberal party. Rhodes still won by nearly five hundred votes and retained the seat until 1921.

In 1916 Borden proposed that Rhodes become deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. He was elected Speaker in 1917 following Sévigny's appointment to cabinet. Rhodes was re-elected Speaker following the 1917 election, becoming the first person since Cockburn to preside over more than one Parliament. Even Laurier commended Rhodes for his impartiality, dignity and knowledge of parliamentary law. Rhodes was also one of the few men capable of squelching Sir Sam Hughes, the ebullient Minister of Militia. He retired from politics in 1921 to become president of the Ontario-based British American Nickel Company. Four years later the company failed and Rhodes decided to go back into politics.

Despite having lived outside Nova Scotia for more than a decade he was asked by some provincial Conservatives to take over leadership of

their party from W. L. Hall. The Liberals had been in power for forty-three years in Nova Scotia but their administration was showing signs of weakness. Rhodes was reluctant to interfere with a duly elected leader but suddenly a mysterious assault on Hall along the waterfront led to gossip about his private life. This threatened to undermine the Conservatives' chances of victory and a stormy joint meeting of the Conservative Party executive and candidates deposed Hall and chose Rhodes to lead the party in the forthcoming provincial election.

Rhodes embraced Maritime Rights as the theme of his campaign. He promised to end federal influence and domination in provincial affairs, to stop the exodus of young people from the province and generally to work to redress regional grievances. Party lines crumbled as the Conservatives more than doubled their share of the popular vote winning forty of the forty-three seats in the House of Assembly. His government was re-elected in 1928 although with a considerably reduced majority. During his period as Premier he introduced pensions for teachers and allowances for widowed mothers. He sought to reorganize and modernize the government.

His most difficult problem was abolition of the appointed Legislative Council which had the power to veto legislation passed by the Assembly. At first Rhodes offered pensions to members for supporting abolition but they refused. He then asked the Lieutenant-Governor to appoint a sufficient number of new Councilors to ensure abolition. The Lieutenant-Governor sought legal advice from Ottawa and was instructed by the federal government to refuse approval. The matter was taken to court by Nova Scotia and after years of legal proceedings the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council declared the Lieutenant-Governor had full power to appoint as many Councilors as he pleased. The Legislative Council was abolished in 1929.

When Arthur Meighen resigned as leader of the federal Conservative Party, Rhodes was one of the men considered to succeed him. He opted to remain in Nova Scotia, but after R.B. Bennett led the Conservatives to victory in the 1930 election he asked Rhodes to become Minister of Fisheries. Rhodes held that position for two years before taking over the Finance portfolio. During the next three years he had to present some of the most austere budgets in Canadian history. They were filled with tax increases and cuts in spending intended to end the economic depression which seemed to worsen each year. It appeared his string of good fortune had run out. But not so. Not only did Rhodes personally escape blame from his contemporaries for the depression but subsequent generations have not heaped upon him the abuse that dogged Bennett till the end of his days. Rhodes was appointed to the Senate less than three months before the Conservative defeat in the 1935 election. He spent several years as an active member of the Upper Chamber before his death in Ottawa at age 66.





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**Rodolphe Lemieux 1922-1930**

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*Had Rodolphe Lemieux been born a generation earlier or later he might well have become Prime Minister. Certainly in terms of background, training, intellect and natural ability few Canadians have ever been more suited to the Prime Minister's office. Instead he is remembered as Laurier's faithful lieutenant and under Mackenzie King the first Speaker to preside over three Parliaments.*

Lemieux was born in Montreal in 1866, the son of an official in the Canadian Customs office. He began his education at the Seminary in Nicolet but in 1881 his father was transferred to Ottawa. Lemieux continued his studies at the University of Ottawa where he also participated in theatre, rugby and debating. He frequently spent afternoons in the gallery of the House of Commons where he was particularly impressed by the performance of the young Liberal leader, Wilfrid Laurier. Lemieux decided to study law in Montreal. To pay for his education he worked as a journalist and reporter for several English and French newspapers before becoming assistant editor of *La Patrie* in 1886.

As a newspaperman Lemieux became acquainted with many federal and provincial politicians. After receiving his law degree Lemieux joined a prestigious Montreal law firm which included two former Quebec Premiers, Honoré Mercier and Louis Jetté. He could have entered politics at any time but was more attracted by the scholarly life. In 1896 he received a doctorate for his dissertation on imprisonment for civil debts. This earned him an appointment to Laval University's law faculty. At age 29 he was the youngest member of the university's professorial staff.

In 1896 Lemieux was elected to the House of Commons as the Liberal member for Rouville. Over the next twenty-five years no man worked harder for the Liberal Party and none was more faithful to Laurier. Lemieux became Solicitor General in 1904 and later Postmaster General, Minister of Labour and briefly Minister of Marine and Fisheries. In the Labour portfolio his Deputy Minister was none other than Mackenzie King. They were responsible for the *Industrial Disputes Investigation Act* which declared no strike or lockout in a public utility or mine could be legal until the differences had been referred to a three-man board of conciliation representing the employer, the employees and the public.

In 1907 Laurier asked Lemieux to undertake a sensitive diplomatic mission to Japan whose government was protesting discriminatory Canadian immigration policies. Lemieux took several months to immerse himself in Japanese history and culture. His mission was highly successful, for he succeeded in reaching an agreement whereby Japan would curtail its own emigration. In addition to his ministerial duties Lemieux continued to write articles and books on constitutional history and law. He became a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1908 and served as its President ten years later. He was one of Canada's best known experts on world affairs and it is said he was once offered the editorship of the international edition of the *New York Herald*. In 1928 Lemieux lectured at the Sorbonne on the political evolution of Canada.

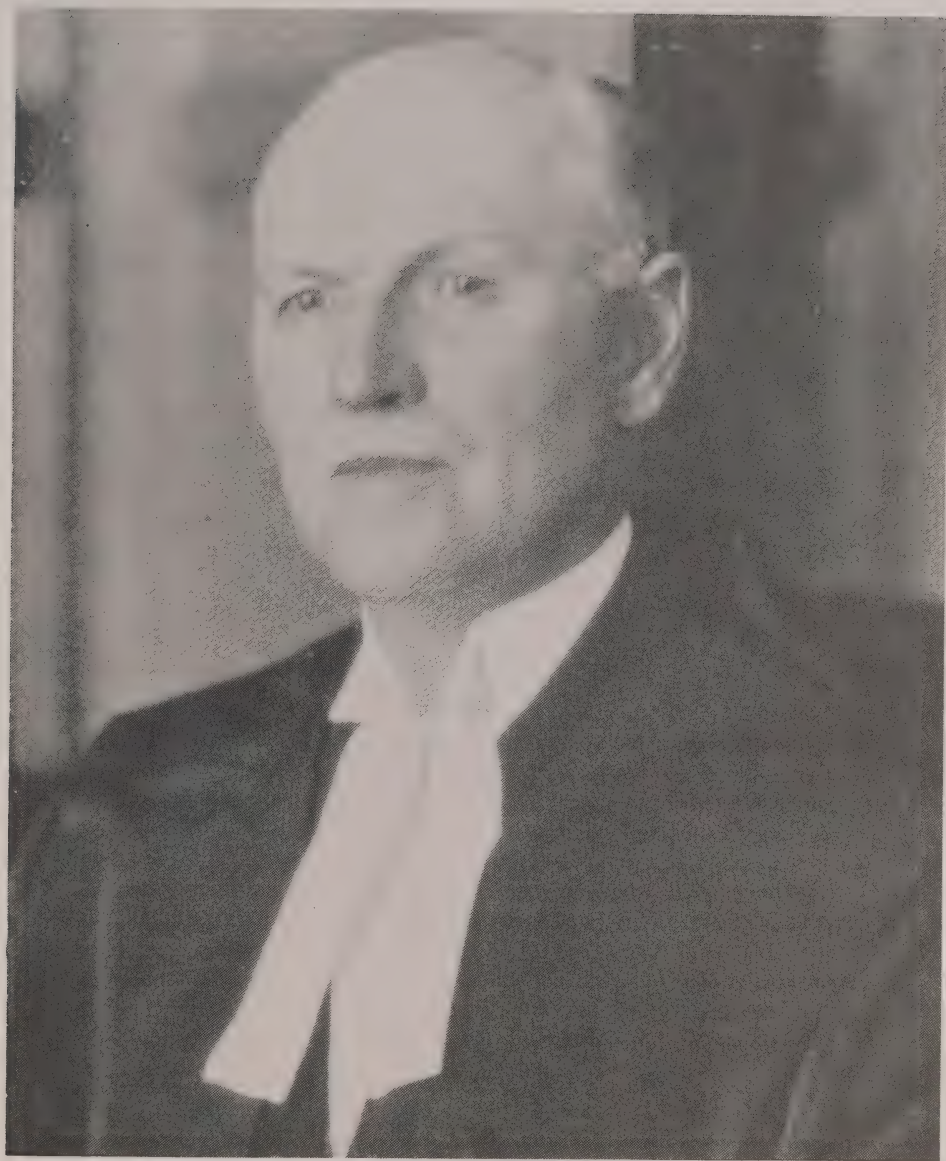
Despite his international interests Lemieux remained one of the party's best debaters and campaigners. During the 1911 election Henri Bourassa's Nationalist Movement mounted a serious challenge to the Liberals. Lemieux debated with Bourassa in some of the most famous political meetings ever held in the province of Quebec. At St-Hyacinthe on August 13 more than thirty thousand people from all parts of the province turned out. The two master orators swayed the throngs with wit and passion. When the election was over the Liberals had retained a majority of seats in Quebec but they lost heavily in Ontario. In opposition Lemieux was a sharper critic than Laurier and together they assailed Conservative policies which, they argued, put the interests of the Empire before those of Canada. When war broke out Lemieux said he supported Canadian participation but not conscription. His only son volunteered and was killed at the front. The death of Laurier was a severe blow to Lemieux whose eulogy on February 25, 1919 was one of the most eloquent and moving speeches ever delivered in the House of Commons.

Under Mackenzie King the Liberals swept back to power in the 1921 election. In selecting a Quebec lieutenant King had to decide between Lemieux and Ernest Lapointe. The latter was closer to King on social issues. Lemieux became Speaker of the House, a position he held for the rest of the decade. Certainly the most difficult period for him was the constitutional crisis of 1926. The House and the country were in an uproar because Mackenzie King had asked Governor-General Byng to dissolve Parliament and the Governor-General refused. Instead Lord Byng invited the Conservatives to form a government. In spite of assurances of support from the Progressive Party, the Conservatives were unable to maintain control of the House. Lemieux had to make several crucial rulings. Five were appealed and one was overturned. Still he managed to keep the Speakership aloof from the intense political debate of the time. The climax came in the early morning hours of July 2 over a Liberal motion that the Conservative ministers were in violation of the privileges of the House for failing to vacate their seats



in order to administer the respective departments assigned to them. The motion was approved by one vote. A member who had voted against the government rose to say he had been paired and should not have voted but the Speaker ruled the vote must stand and the government fell.

Lemieux's last term began on a sour note when Conservative House Leader, Hugh Guthrie, protested the nomination saying it failed to respect the principle of French-English alternation. He suggested there would be outrage in Quebec if an English-Canadian was confirmed in office for three consecutive Parliaments. Other members of the party dissociated themselves from this view. Before the 1930 election King named Lemieux to the Senate where he served for seven years. When he died in Montreal at age 70 Lemieux had been a parliamentarian for more than 41 years.



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**George Black 1930 -1935**

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*George Black was one of those larger-than-life Klondike characters who mushed his way over the trail of '98. He staked a claim, panned for gold, made a fortune, lost it, worked the Yukon river, set up a law practice, entered politics and eventually became Speaker of the House of Commons. He travelled around the world, hobnobbed with royalty and enjoyed the luxuries society had to offer. But when election time came he would get out his canoe or dog sled in order to meet the electors in his constituency. As Speaker he kept a .22 caliber pistol in his chamber. He used it to shoot rabbits he spotted nibbling the shrubs on Parliament Hill. One day he shot six and promptly called in reporters to make sure the news went out across the country.*

**B**orn in Woodstock, New Brunswick in 1871 Black was descended from United Empire Loyalists. He attended school in Richibucto, a little community near the Northumberland Strait, then went to study law in Fredericton. For an ambitious young man with a gift for public speaking, politics was a natural outlet. he campaigned for the Conservatives in 1896. The same year he was admitted to the Bar and opened a small office in Woodstock. When word came of a gold strike in the Klondike Black closed his office, collected what money he could and at age 25 joined the human stampede north. He staked a claim on Livingstone Creek in 1899 and found enough gold to make him rich, only to see it swept away in a spring flood. He gave up prospecting and took a job on a riverboat before deciding to open a law practice in Dawson.

In 1905 Black was elected to the Yukon Council on which he served for three terms. He ran as a Conservative in the deferred federal election of 1909 but was defeated. Two years later, as campaign manager for his friend H.H. Stevens, he helped the Conservatives return to power in Ottawa. Black was rewarded with an appointment as Commissioner of the Yukon Territories. He is best remembered for his efforts to obtain legislation to protect miners, loggers and others who worked for companies that went bankrupt in the boom and bust northern economy. His knowledge of the area, his proven ability and his cordial informality also made him a very popular Commissioner.



As news of the Great War reached the Yukon Black decided his place was at the front. He wrote and telegraphed the Minister of Militia offering to raise a Yukon Regiment but received no reply. Undaunted Black went to Ottawa where Sam Hughes told him that if Black could raise a battalion Hughes would make him Colonel. Many men had already left the Yukon but after a summer of recruiting Black was able to enlist 226 men which he named the Yukon Infantry Company. They sailed from Halifax in January 1917. After further training in England they were renamed the 17th Machine Gun Company and went to France as "C" Battery of the newly formed Second Canadian Machine Gun Brigade. On the road to Amiens Black was shot in the leg by a sniper. A few minutes later he received a piece of shrapnel in the shoulder. While recuperating in England he kept busy by defending twenty-five Canadian soldiers who were charged with failing to obey their officers.

Black returned to Vancouver in 1919 where he ran and lost in the 1920 British Columbia election. The next year he succeeded in winning the Yukon seat in the House of Commons. While in opposition he proposed an amendment to the *Yukon Act* to give Yukoners the same right to jury trial as people in other parts of Canada. Another of his bills sought to make titles to mining properties secure and no longer subject to change by Order-in-Council from Ottawa.

After being re-elected three times Black was asked to be Speaker by R.B. Bennett in 1930. He became the first person west of Manitoba to hold that office. Black's years as Speaker were marred by personal and financial problems. By January 1935 he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown and disappeared shortly before Parliament was to open. Prime Minister Bennett drafted a letter of resignation and dispatched his private secretary to find Black. No mention was made of illness and the press reported that Black was suffering from the effects of injuries received during the war. In fact Black's health had deteriorated so much that he was committed to a psychiatric hospital in England. While under treatment the 1935 election was called.

His wife Martha decided to run in his place. She was, if anything, even more of a Yukon character than he, having left her first husband and crossed the Chilkoot trail while pregnant. She became a successful businesswoman who married Black in 1904. She became the second woman to sit in the House of Commons. In 1936 George Black was released from hospital but had to spend several years recuperating in Vancouver while Martha commuted between Ottawa, Vancouver and the Yukon. By 1940 Black was fully recovered and Martha stood aside allowing him to recapture his seat and return to Parliament. Black remained in the House until 1949. Then he and Martha returned to the Klondike where they enjoyed their status as Yukon's most famous citizens. After his wife's death in 1957 George remarried and moved to Vancouver where he died eight years later at age 94.



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**James Langstaff Bowman 1935**

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*James Langstaff Bowman, the first Manitoban to be Speaker, came to office under extremely difficult circumstances. George Black's physical and mental health had deteriorated following the adjournment of Parliament in July 1934. Prime Minister Bennett had hoped the Speaker's condition would improve enough to allow him to continue but finally in January 1935 Bennett asked for and received Black's resignation. Thus with Parliament ready to resume Bennett found himself with neither Speaker nor Deputy Speaker since Armand Lavergne had been absent for most of the last session due to an illness from which he never recovered. After obtaining Black's resignation Bennett checked with the Clerk of the House, Arthur Beauchesne, about precedents for changing Speakers in mid-Parliament. He then approached Bowman who accepted Bennett's request to become Speaker a few hours before the Governor-General arrived to open Parliament.*

**B**owman was born in 1879 at Thornhill, Ontario of United Empire Loyalist stock. His family moved to Manitoba when he was quite young and Bowman attended school in Portage La Prairie where he later became a teacher. Bowman gave up teaching in order to study law at the University of Manitoba, being admitted to the legal profession in 1908. The following year he opened an office in Dauphin where he quickly became one of the best known figures in that northern Manitoban community. An active member of the Board of Trade, the Canadian Club, the Red Cross and other organizations Bowman was also an avid curler. He twice played on Canadian teams in international competitions, including an "all MP" rink which won the unofficial world championship in 1932 at Lake Placid.

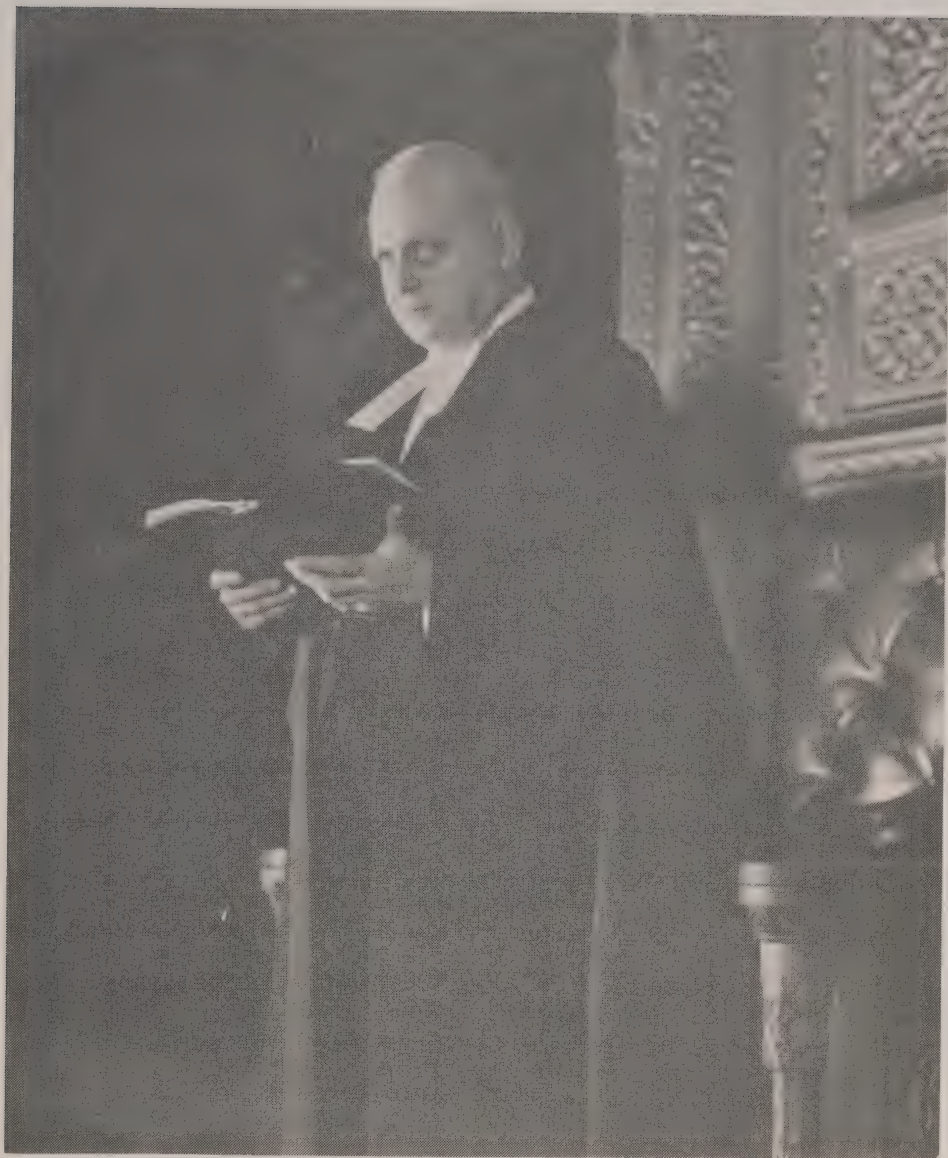
In 1917 Bowman was elected mayor of Dauphin, a position he retained twice by acclamation. He ran for the Conservatives in the general elections of 1925 and 1926 but was defeated both times by his Progressive opponent, W.J. Ward. Bowman finally took the seat from Ward by some six hundred votes in 1930. In the House Bowman spoke mainly on issues of direct interest to farmers such as the price of wheat, freight rates, interest rates and tariffs. He was a conscientious worker



who served on a special committee established to report on the operation of the *Civil Service Act*.

Another special committee on which he served recommended establishment of the Translation Bureau. As Speaker for the final months of a five-year Parliament Bowman had little opportunity to learn the ropes. He found himself in the middle of a pressure-packed situation where tempers were short as members staked out positions for the forthcoming election. Under the circumstances Bowman did extremely well. A few days after he took the Chair Mackenzie King told him condescendingly that a certain ruling was wrong but in view of the Speaker's inexperience he would not appeal the decision. Later King called on Bowman to admit he had been wrong and the Speaker correct.

By the end of his term there was general agreement among members that Bowman had lived up to the standards expected of a Speaker. His accomplishments in this regard carried little weight with the electors of Dauphin. His arch rival Ward, running this time as a Liberal, defeated him by the most decisive margin of the four times they faced each other at the polls. The defeat of the government meant that Bowman had no prospect of any reward for his services. He returned to his law practice in Dauphin where he died in 1951 at age 71.



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**Pierre-François Casgrain 1936 - 1940**

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*Prior to the reforms of 1986 the Speaker had always been nominated by the Prime Minister. Theoretically this choice could be opposed by candidates nominated by other members but this never happened. In all but two cases the persons nominated by the Prime Minister were elected unanimously. Aside from Anglin, the only Speaker who failed to receive backing from the entire House was Pierre-François Casgrain. This unfortunate beginning was a disappointment to the soft-spoken man whose entire career was characterized by a desire to see things run smoothly and efficiently.*

The Casgrain family, long prominent in Quebec political life, is descended from Jean Casgrain who arrived from France around 1750. Speaker Casgrain was born in 1886, the son of a Montreal physician. His mother died when he was three years old. He was raised by a grandmother who saw her seven children and all her grandchildren except Pierre die at young ages. Casgrain attended St. Mary's College then went to Laval University where he graduated in law. After articling with his cousin Thomas Chase Casgrain, later Postmaster General in the Borden Government, he joined a Montreal law firm.

Casgrain worked as organizer for the Liberal party at both the federal and provincial levels. In 1917 Casgrain's father-in-law, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Charlevoix, decided to retire from politics. Casgrain received the Liberal nomination and won the election which was dominated by the conscription issue. Casgrain supported Laurier's opposition to conscription as the Liberals swept the province.

Quietly and without fanfare Casgrain worked his way up in the party and in the House. From 1921-1925 he was whip of the Quebec caucus and from 1926-36 Chief Liberal Whip. This was a particularly difficult assignment during the 1926 constitutional crisis when Parliament frequently sat all night with motions being decided by a handful of votes. Casgrain did yeoman service as organizer and fund raiser for the party. Elections posed a special problem for him since he represented a huge rural constituency with poor roads and only a few miles of railways. Campaigning by boat, sleigh, airplane and various other



forms of transportation he won seven consecutive elections, usually by large margins.

When the Liberals came to power after the 1935 election Mackenzie King nominated Casgrain to be Speaker. He used a rather novel logic to justify the choice saying the qualities which enable a member to command the confidence of his own party are the same ones likely to win him the confidence of the House. The Leader of the Opposition, R.B. Bennett, opposed Casgrain's nomination not because of his highly partisan background but because Casgrain had authorized the firing of 127 permanent employees of the House of Commons before formally being elected Speaker. It was not unusual for a new administration to make many changes in House of Commons personnel, nor was it unprecedented for a person nominated as Speaker to move into his office and make decisions before he was elected. In this case, however, Bennett thought Casgrain had shown poor judgement. He demanded Casgrain's name be withdrawn. After a long debate the Liberal majority prevailed and Casgrain was elected Speaker.

The status of the Speakership during elections was referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. It held only two meetings on the subject and failed to make any report. The matter was not formally resolved but subsequent Speakers have been careful not to make any administrative decisions until they have been elected by the House of Commons.

After the 1940 election Casgrain returned to the backbenches and became Secretary of State when Fernand Rinfret died shortly thereafter. Under the *Defence of Canada Regulations* the Secretary of State possessed vast emergency powers including censorship. He held this portfolio for two years before being appointed to the Quebec Bench. Casgrain died in Montreal at age 64.

Like Speaker Black, Casgrain married a woman with a remarkable career in her own right. Thérèse Casgrain was the daughter of Sir Rodolphe Forget, former Conservative Member of Parliament and a prominent Montreal businessman. For many years Madame Casgrain headed the movement for female suffrage in Quebec. Following her husband's appointment to the Bench she ran as an independent Liberal in his riding but finished second. She later became leader of the provincial CCF Party, the first woman to head a provincial party in Canada. Never elected to the House of Commons in six attempts, she was appointed to the Senate by Prime Minister Trudeau in 1970.



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**James Allison Glen 1940-1945**

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*The Progressive Party had its origin in the discontent of western Canadians with financial and industrial policies of both the Liberal and Conservative parties. The Progressives won 65 seats in the House of Commons in 1921 making them the second largest party after the Liberals. They declined to form the Official Opposition because of internal policy differences among members from different provinces. In 1926 James Allison Glen, along with all other Progressives elected from Manitoba, decided he could have more influence on matters affecting the west by associating with the Liberals than by acting independently. By 1930 the Progressives had disappeared as a party.*

**B**orn at Renton, Dumbartonshire, Scotland in 1877 Glen was the son of a boot and shoe merchant. Educated entirely in Scotland he graduated from the University of Glasgow with a degree in law. After working as a solicitor for a few years Glen decided to emigrate to Canada in 1911. Arriving in Winnipeg where he had friends and professional contacts, Glen gained some experience in Canadian law and became a member of the Manitoba Bar. He then moved to Russell where he opened an office. A keen interest in education led him to serve on the Russell School Board and later as President of the Manitoba Trustees Association for four years.

In politics Glen was originally a Progressive serving as chief organizer for the leader of the party, T.A. Crerar, in the elections of 1917 and 1921. During the 1926 campaign the Liberal and Progressive parties in Manitoba decided to co-operate by naming a single candidate in each constituency. In Marquette, a large rural riding with practically no industry except agriculture, Glen won the seat for the Liberal-Progressives. The group was led by Robert Forke, who was subsequently appointed to the cabinet. They attended the Liberal caucus and sat with the Liberals in the House of Commons. The Liberal-Progressives also met separately and in debate they frequently criticized the government on issues of interest to farmers. Glen, for example, condemned the 1927 budget and called on the Minister of Finance to make a definite statement in favour of tariff reduction. Notwithstanding their success in keeping western Canadian views to the forefront all Manitoba Liberal-Progressives were defeated in the



1930 election. Five years later Glen returned to the House of Commons but this time he had dropped the Progressive label to run as a Liberal.

In Parliament, Glen was known for his quick wit, genial personality and broad Scottish accent which he retained despite his many years in Canada. As a government backbencher Glen had relatively few opportunities to display his skills in debate. He was a stalwart of the committee system participating in two special investigations — one on the operation of the *Civil Service Act*; the other on electoral matters including proportional representation, redistribution, electoral lists and other questions relating to elections.

As Speaker from 1940-1945 Glen had to deal with some unusual wartime situations such as deciding whether certain words or sentences be stricken from the record since they could provide useful military information to the enemy. The atmosphere was such that Glen occasionally had to ask members to refrain from applauding his rulings. Despite solidarity among the parties on many issues the Speaker still had to deal with animated debates, appeals and unparliamentary language. The presence of members with radical views such as Liguori Lacombe and Fred Rose caused special problems for Glen, particularly the former who tended to disobey most rules of debate, forcing the Speaker to name him on more than one occasion.

With the end of the war in sight Mackenzie King obtained a dissolution of Parliament with an election set for June 11, 1945. As the campaign got underway King asked Glen to join the cabinet as Minister of Mines and Resources. Glen held this portfolio for three years during which he concentrated his attention on the development of mining in the western provinces and the Northwest Territories. After suffering a heart attack Glen was obliged to give up his cabinet post. This left Manitoba without a representative in the cabinet. Prime Minister St. Laurent, who had replaced Mackenzie King, was anxious to have the Liberal Premier of Manitoba, Stuart Garson, as Minister of Justice.

Garson was willing to join the government but wanted to run in Marquette which meant Glen would have to be persuaded to resign his seat. As there was a Senate vacancy for Manitoba Glen said he would accept an appointment to the Upper House. The seat had traditionally gone to a Catholic and Mr. St. Laurent said he would not depart from this convention. After several months of negotiations Glen finally agreed to resign in exchange for appointment as Chairman of the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission. Ill health prevented him from playing a very active role on the Commission. He died less than two years later in Ottawa at age 72.



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**Gaspard Fauteux 1945-1949**

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*Gaspard Fauteux lacked two of the usual prerequisites for the Speakership — legal training and long experience in the House of Commons. He did have an easygoing, charming personality characterized by a willingness to gamble, to switch careers and to depart from well established practices. These traits may not seem particularly pertinent to the Speakership but neither did certain other qualities that Mackenzie King liked to see in his Speakers. Fauteux was handsome, well groomed, had a taste for expensive clothes and came from a good family all of which were important to King. Furthermore Fauteux had twice defeated Montreal's flamboyant mayor, Camillien Houde, one of King's bêtes noires.*

Fauteux was born in St-Hyacinthe into a family with a strong tradition of involvement in politics. His grandfather, Honoré Mercier and his uncle, Lomer Gouin, were both former Premiers of Quebec. On his father's side his grandmother had remarried Joseph Godbout, a Member of Parliament for Beauce later appointed to the Senate by Laurier.

Fauteux attended classical colleges in Quebec City and Montreal before enrolling in dentistry. During the First World War he joined the Canadian Army Dental Corps as a Sergeant. Afterwards he opened an office in Montreal and later expanded it into a highly successful clinic employing several dentists and nurses. He soon became more interested in business than dentistry abandoning his profession to become President of Refinex Trading Company, a firm involved in importing, exporting and brokerage.

During the early 1930s Camillien Houde was at the zenith of his popularity as mayor of Montreal and leader of the Conservative party of Quebec. His greatest support came from the poor areas of Montréal, site of many intense political battles. The 1931 provincial election pitted Fauteux against Houde in the mayor's own stamping grounds of St. Mary's. When the dust settled Fauteux easily won the seat for the Liberals. The provincial Liberals were soon in trouble against the rising power of Maurice Duplessis. Fauteux lost his seat in 1935 and devoted the next seven years to his business interests. In 1942 he decided to return to politics, this time at the federal level.

The controversial plebiscite on conscription was before the House of Commons. Isolationist and nationalist forces were gaining ground in the province. Never one to back away from a fight Fauteux easily won



back St. Mary's in a by-election. Houde had been interned since 1940 for advising the public to ignore the *National Registration Act* but in 1944 he was released and once more won the mayoralty. When the 1945 general election was announced Houde set out to avenge his earlier defeat by Fauteux. He challenged the dentist-cum-industrialist in St. Mary's but Fauteux again emerged victorious. Mackenzie King was ecstatic. He called it the outstanding victory of the campaign.

During his years on the backbenches Fauteux had kept fairly quiet. He spoke against conscription and he served as a Canadian delegate to the 1945 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Conference but he had never shown any interest in parliamentary procedure. It was somewhat of a surprise when Prime Minister King nominated him Speaker in September 1945. Both King and the Leader of the Opposition paid homage to Fauteux's skill as a campaigner and expressed confidence he would leave partisanship behind when he took the Chair.

Unfortunately Fauteux ran into problems not because of partisanship but rather inexperience and a tendency to rely on pure logic rather than common sense. For example, in ruling on points of order Speakers are not obliged to listen to argument. Nevertheless most Speakers will allow all sides to be heard before coming to a decision. Fauteux repeatedly presented his rulings before members had a chance to state their case. This led to numerous appeals, not because his rulings were unsound, but because of the rather tactless way he treated members.

Fauteux also had a unique approach to parliamentary reform. He was genuinely impressed by complaints about the way Parliament worked but instead of asking the House Leaders to form a committee to look into the matter he tabled his own report on parliamentary reform in December 1947. Since he was not an expert in this area the report was written mostly by the Clerk of the House, Arthur Beauchesne. The report was eventually considered by a special committee but they gave it only cursory attention.

Fauteux was at his best outside the Commons. He enjoyed the many social functions Speakers must perform and indulged in them with great enthusiasm bringing to the office an informal, human dimension well-suited to the society of which he was "First Commoner". The Speakership allowed Fauteux to pursue his love of travel. He visited every province in Canada and many American states, often in search of good hunting or fishing.

Fauteux returned to the backbenches after the 1949 election. Less than a year later he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, a position he held for eight years. This gave him numerous opportunities to wine and dine the important public men of Quebec, including former adversaries like Camillien Houde and Maurice Duplessis. He improved his position in the business world by accepting directorships of the Canadian Home Assurance Company, the United Asbestos Company and other companies. Fauteux died in Montreal at the age of 64.



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**William Ross Macdonald 1949-1953**

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*Historically Canada is a nation of small communities. Small town values have dominated much of our public life. Of the many Speakers who came from such backgrounds, none embodied the virtues of this environment better than William Ross Macdonald of Brantford. Throughout a career in which he served as a Member of Parliament, Speaker of the House of Commons, Senator, Solicitor General, Opposition Leader in the Senate, Minister Without Portfolio and finally Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario he made it a practice to spend his Saturday mornings at the Brantford market greeting friends and listening to their political views or problems.*

Macdonald was born in Toronto on Christmas Day 1891, the son of a dry goods merchant who migrated to Canada from the Inverness district of Scotland. After attending school in Hamilton and Brantford he entered Knox College at the University of Toronto to prepare for a career in the Presbyterian ministry. In the summer he went to the Queen Charlotte Islands to work as a missionary. Shortly after graduation in 1914 the First World War erupted. Macdonald enlisted and went overseas with the 4th Infantry Battalion. During the Battle of the Somme he suffered second degree burns to half his body. For months he hovered between life and death in hospitals in France, England and Canada. After his recovery Macdonald abandoned plans to enter the ministry in favour of a career in law. He studied at Osgoode Hall graduating in 1920. After a year practicing in Simcoe he moved back to Brantford where he and his brother opened a law office.

Macdonald sought the Liberal nomination for the 1926 election but was defeated by a single vote. In 1930 he won the nomination but lost the election. The voters of Brantford finally sent him to the House of Commons in 1935 thus beginning a political career that lasted nearly forty years. Mackenzie King recognized Macdonald's ability but could not find a place for him in the cabinet. Macdonald's staunch support for compulsory military service during the Second World War contrasted with King's timid, ambivalent approach. Macdonald was named Deputy Speaker in 1945 and Speaker in 1949. By all accounts he was a most popular presiding officer, respected for his knowledge of the rules and even more for an innate understanding of the parliamentary traditions he was charged to uphold. His willingness to learn French



added to his popularity among Quebec MPs. The inevitable social activities were characterized by his informality and sincere interest in people.

By the end of his term Macdonald was being mentioned along with Vincent Massey as a possible choice for appointment as the first Canadian born Governor-General. Instead Macdonald was appointed to the Senate. This turned out to be not so much a reward for past service as the start of a new and challenging career. He joined the St. Laurent cabinet as Government Leader in the Senate, a position requiring tremendous energy and ability in order to understand and defend the wide range of government legislation which comes to the Senate from the House of Commons. In January 1954 Macdonald also became Solicitor General, a position he held until the defeat of the St. Laurent government in 1957. He then became Opposition Leader in the Senate and found himself frequently in the limelight, as during the controversy surrounding the resignation of the Governor of the Bank of Canada in 1961.

When the Liberals returned to office in 1963 Lester Pearson took advantage of Macdonald's experience by making him Minister without Portfolio and once again Government Leader in the Senate. After helping the new government get established Macdonald resigned both positions in February 1964. Three years later on his 75th birthday he retired from the Senate. Much too active to remain on the sidelines, Macdonald was named Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario in 1968. His war service, religious training and long political experience were an ideal preparation for this role as wise old statesman. Despite his age, Macdonald brought great energy to his new position which he held until 1974 when he returned to Brantford for the last time. After a short illness he died at age 84.



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**Louis-René Beaudoin 1953-1957**

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*René Beaudoin's career stands as a tragic reminder of what can happen to the presiding officer who loses his reputation for impartiality. To some extent Beaudoin was a victim of circumstances but he also contributed to his own downfall by making mistakes and by allowing partisan considerations to influence the way he interpreted the rules. He not only brought discredit to the institution of Parliament but ruined his own promising career. Every subsequent Speaker lives with the knowledge that what happened to Beaudoin could happen again, but this very knowledge makes it less likely such a disaster will recur.*

Unlike so many of his French-Canadian predecessors, René Beaudoin did not come from the upper echelons of Quebec society. His father was a boilermaker in Montreal when René was born in 1912. There was little money available for education but Beaudoin was a brilliant student who won a scholarship for two years of study at the Collège de Montréal. He later attended the Seminary of Ste-Thérèse, St. Mary's College, St. Laurent College and the University of Montreal, where he obtained a degree in law. To finance his education Beaudoin took whatever jobs he could. At various times he worked as a bus driver, a watchman and as a labourer. He also taught English at night school.

While at university Beaudoin had done some acting. When the Second World War began a friend, remembering Beaudoin's voice and diction, asked him to do publicity work for the Wartime Prices and Trade Board. He made a number of radio programs explaining how the board operated and calling on Quebecers to support it. His voice was so well suited to the radio that a Montreal station retained him to translate and broadcast important wartime speeches of Churchill, Roosevelt and other leaders. Beaudoin became legal adviser to the Quebec Federation of Labour. This was supposed to be a nonpartisan position but he campaigned for the Liberal party in the 1944 provincial election. The next year Beaudoin dropped his other activities and won a seat in the House of Commons for Vaudreuil-Soulanges. In 1948 the Liberals chose Louis St. Laurent to replace Mackenzie King as Leader. Mr. St. Laurent was impressed by René Beaudoin whom he proposed as Deputy Speaker and subsequently as Speaker following the 1953 election.



His career in the Chair got off to a fine start when the nomination was seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, George Drew. This marked the first time since Confederation that anyone other than a Cabinet Minister had seconded the nomination of a Speaker. Beaudoin chaired a committee on procedure and became so absorbed in the problem that he started to write a book on the subject. His reputation as a competent, intelligent presiding officer increased every year. Then disaster struck.

The American-owned Trans-Canada Pipe Line Company was in the process of building a natural gas pipeline from Alberta to Quebec. The Northern Ontario section proved so costly the company asked the Liberal Government to finance this part of the line. They also asked that certain loans necessary to build the Alberta-Saskatchewan section be authorized by Parliament before June 7, 1956. The Liberals agreed to these requests and in May 1956 introduced legislation to give them effect. This touched off the famous pipeline debate. The government invoked closure four times in twenty two days to get its legislation through the House. The use of closure was not unprecedented but the way it was done seemed a blatant violation of the spirit of parliamentary democracy. For example the minister introducing the legislation, C.D. Howe, concluded his speech by giving notice of closure before the opposition had even spoken!

The debate was marked by a series of procedural disputes with Beaudoin ruling consistently against the opposition. On Thursday May 31, he allowed a debate to take place on an appeal from a ruling of the Deputy Speaker. This was contrary to the rules as was his decision to entertain a question of privilege at this point. As a result of these interruptions it appeared the opposition would succeed in delaying approval of the pipeline bill until after the June 7 deadline. The next day, so called "Black Friday", Speaker Beaudoin ruled that he had made an error in listening to the question of privilege. He formally moved that the House revert to the position it was in on Thursday evening and proceed with the vote on the appeal. The opposition was irate; a group of members approached the Chair shaking their fists in anger and screaming "coward", "dictator", "traitor". Nevertheless the proposition moved by the Chair was approved although both the Conservatives and the CCF refused to vote as they claimed no question was validly before the House.

The following Monday George Drew introduced a motion of censure against Mr. Beaudoin whom he accused of destroying the Speakership. The Liberal majority defeated the motion but less than a month later Mr. Drew called attention to a newspaper in which there was a letter by Beaudoin criticizing the behaviour of opposition members during the pipeline debate. Beaudoin argued it was a private letter, not intended to be published. The following day, however, he placed his resignation before the House. Prime Minister St. Laurent was out of the country but

on returning he persuaded Mr. Beaudoin to stay on until the end of the Parliament.

The pipeline debate and the conduct of the Liberals were factors in the victory of the Progressive Conservative party in the 1957 general election. While many cabinet ministers were defeated, Mr. Beaudoin was re-elected. He was disheartened and took little part in parliamentary debate, retiring from public life in 1958. In September of that year Beaudoin obtained a Reno divorce and married a woman twenty three years his junior. He applied for American citizenship and registered in the doctoral programme at Columbia University. His thesis was on the future of insurance regulation in the United States but it was never completed. In 1959 he moved West hoping to find a position as a lawyer or teacher. Unable to find satisfactory work he became an insurance adjuster. With his wife he set up a company to produce recordings for the use of the blind. Their marriage soon broke up and Beaudoin again drifted from job to job. He even spent some time serving beer in a roadside tavern in Arizona before eventually returning to Montreal where he died of a heart attack at age 57.



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**Daniel Roland Michener 1957-1962**

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*Defeat is a fact of life in politics, the classic case being John Diefenbaker who lost five times before winning his first election and twice before becoming leader of his party. Roland Michener, Speaker during most of the Diefenbaker years, also experienced the bitter taste of defeat. Two political careers, first in Ontario and later at the federal level, were ended by the electorate. In both victory and defeat, however, his personal qualities set him apart from his fellows. The appointment of Michener as Governor-General in 1967 was a fitting climax to an outstanding public career.*

**M**ichener was born in Lacombe, Alberta in 1900. His father, Edward, a former mayor of Red Deer served for eight years as Leader of the provincial Conservative Party before being appointed to the Senate in 1917. After attending school in Alberta Michener joined the Royal Air Force in 1918 but the war ended before he saw combat duty. Returning to school at the University of Alberta, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Governor-General's medal for an essay on differences between presidential and parliamentary forms of government and a Rhodes scholarship for study at Oxford. While in England he earned both a Master of Arts and a law degree. He returned to Canada in 1924 to open a law practice in Toronto.

Michener first ran for office as a Conservative in the Ontario provincial election of 1943 but was defeated. He ran successfully in 1945, entering the cabinet as Provincial Secretary a year later. Premier George Drew gave Michener the task of reorganizing cabinet business which always had been carried out rather informally with neither an agenda nor a record of proceedings. After studying the situation in other jurisdictions Michener introduced reforms to improve the efficiency of government in Ontario. Government reorganization not being a particularly attractive issue Michener was defeated by the CCF candidate in the 1948 provincial election. The following year he ran for the House of Commons but again was defeated by a small margin. Finally elected in 1953 Michener's decision to support Donald Fleming at the 1956 Conservative leadership convention may have cost him a cabinet post when Diefenbaker led the Conservatives to victory. Michener was not even Diefenbaker's first choice as Speaker. He offered that position to Stanley Knowles of the CCF, an acknowledged

procedural expert. Mr. Knowles declined because he felt committed on too many political issues to accept the enforced neutrality of the chair. Diefenbaker then offered the position to Mr. Michener who accepted.

In both the minority Parliament of 1957-58 and the 1958-62 Parliament which saw the Conservatives win the biggest majority in Canadian history, Michener allowed the opposition considerable latitude in question period. This did not sit well with the Prime Minister whose indignation reached a peak on May 25, 1959. He refused to sit down when called to order by the Speaker. While the Prime Minister was unimpressed by Mr. Michener's performance, a group of university professors, led by James Aitchison, began a campaign to make Mr. Michener a permanent Speaker. They proposed the opposition parties refrain from running candidates against him in the 1962 election. All parties would have to agree that whoever won the election they would all support Michener for Speaker. No such agreement was reached and Mr. Michener's defeat in Toronto St. Paul's demonstrated the dilemma of a Speaker who must run as a party man after having remained silent on political issues for several years. It marked the only time since Confederation a Speaker has been defeated in an election where his party managed to form the government.

The defeat of Roland Michener evoked expressions of regret from all parties. Prime Minister Diefenbaker, however, declined to offer the retiring Speaker a Senate or other appointment. Instead Mr. Michener returned to his law practice in Toronto. In 1963 the Government of Manitoba asked him to head a five-man commission on tax structure in the province. The following year Lester Pearson, who had become Prime Minister in 1963, asked Michener to serve as Canada's High Commissioner to India. When Georges Vanier died in 1967 Michener replaced him as Governor General.

His term as Head of State was hectic but highly successful. The first six months consisted of endless entertaining for foreign dignitaries visiting Canada for Expo 67 and other centennial celebrations. During his term Michener travelled extensively throughout Canada. In 1971 he became the first Canadian Governor-General to travel in an official capacity outside the Western Hemisphere. Other notable accomplishments included the organization of a conference of Lieutenant-Governors to allow the men and women who hold this important constitutional office to exchange views and learn from each other. Michener lent the prestige of his office to the movement for physical fitness. He set a personal example by following a rigorous jogging and exercise programme. Following completion of his term, Mr. Michener retired to private life in Toronto. He died there at age 91 in August 1991.



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**Marcel-Joseph-Aimé Lambert 1962-1963**

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*Like laws and by laws, the rules of the House of Commons have meaning only when enforced. Some Speakers take an easygoing attitude, overlooking practices other Speakers would rule out of order. Presiding over a House where the combined opposition far outnumbered the government, Marcel Lambert felt the best way to keep things under control was to insist from the outset that all members adhere strictly to the rules. A Dieppe veteran who survived three years in a German prisoner of war camp, Lambert brought the same qualities of toughness and determination to the task of making the House of Commons a more effective forum for the ventilation of important public matters.*

**M**arcel Lambert was born in Edmonton in 1919. His father was French-Canadian; his mother Belgian. A student at the University of Alberta when the Second World War broke out, Lambert joined the King's Own Calgary Regiment, becoming a lieutenant in the 14th Tank Battalion. He was reported killed in action at Dieppe. His family even held a memorial service before learning he had been taken prisoner. When the war ended Lambert returned to university. He was named Alberta's Rhodes Scholar for 1946; studied law at Oxford, then returned to Canada to establish a law practice in Edmonton.

He held various executive positions with the Alberta Progressive Conservative Association before running for the party in the 1952 provincial election. He finished 23rd out of 29 candidates seeking the six Edmonton seats in the provincial assembly. In 1957 he was elected to the House of Commons, becoming Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence later that year. Following his re-election in 1958 he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue. The 1962 election was a disaster for the Conservatives as their strength in the Commons fell from 208 to 116. When the House met on September 27, 1962, Marcel Lambert was elected Speaker, replacing the defeated Roland Michener.

Following the Throne Speech, his very first action was to call upon all members to make a careful study of the standing orders. A few minutes later he ruled an opposition question out of order because it proffered information instead of seeking it. Over the next several weeks he repeatedly corrected members of all parties on points of procedure. The opposition was particularly upset with his insistence that questions

not be argumentative. On October 16, 1962 Speaker Lambert offered some guidelines for the conduct of Question Period, along with numerous precedents justifying his rulings. The next day, as usual, he ruled several questions out of order but this time two of his rulings were appealed. He was sustained in both cases but this did not prevent other members from prefacing their questions with long statements.

The dominant political issue during Lambert's Speakership was whether Canada should acquire nuclear warheads for its guided missile defence system. The cabinet was split on the issue and the Americans were pressing hard for Canada to accept nuclear warheads. On January 30, 1963 the American State Department issued a press release contradicting certain arguments used by Prime Minister Diefenbaker in a speech on the subject of defence policy. The following day the Leader of the Opposition, Lester Pearson, asked for an emergency debate on the American communiqué. Speaker Lambert refused saying the matter was not of sufficient urgency to warrant a special debate. Mr. Pearson immediately appealed but Lambert said there could be no appeal. He cited precedents to support his decision. At this point Paul Martin appealed the ruling against an appeal. He also cited a number of precedents in support of his request. The ensuing division saw the three opposition parties vote together for the first time. They easily overturned Mr. Lambert's second ruling by a vote of 122 to 104. His first ruling was also put to a vote and defeated. The House then proceeded to hold the emergency debate requested by Mr. Pearson.

The incident made it clear the government was no longer able to control the House, and could not expect to remain in power much longer. On February 5 the Diefenbaker government was defeated on a motion of non-confidence related to the nuclear issue. With an election coming up the cabinet was in disarray as Douglas Harkness, George Hees and Pierre Sévigny had resigned. The Prime Minister asked Speaker Lambert to join the cabinet as Minister of Veterans' Affairs. Lambert won personal re-election in Edmonton but the Conservatives lost the election and he took his place on the opposition benches. In 1966 he was one of twenty-four Conservative MPs who refused to sign a petition declaring loyalty to Mr. Diefenbaker in his fight with Dalton Camp over leadership of the party.

In opposition, Lambert became a leading critic in the areas of defence and finance. He took a keen interest in procedural reform and was active on several committees and subcommittees. When the Conservatives returned to office in 1979, Lambert was elected chairman of the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee. Under his direction it became one of the busiest committees, holding some 20 meetings in the 56 days before the sudden end of the 31st Parliament. He was re-elected for a tenth consecutive time in 1980 but did not run in 1984. He was subsequently appointed to the Canadian Transportation Commission by the Mulroney Government.



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**Alan Aylesworth Macnaughton 1963-1966**

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*Parliamentary procedure is not intended to complicate or obscure public business but rather to protect the rights of Members of Parliament both individually and collectively. It establishes a framework permitting the majority to govern without stifling opposition. But procedures can become outdated and for years successive Canadian Parliaments avoided making significant procedural changes. During the 1960s measures were adopted that touched nearly every aspect of parliamentary procedure. Much credit for the reforms belongs to Alan Macnaughton, who occupied the Chair during two critical years in the mid-sixties.*

Macnaughton was born in Napanee, Ontario in 1903. He studied at Upper Canada College before graduating in law from McGill University in 1929. Following a year of post graduate study at the London School of Economics he established a law practice in Montreal. Macnaughton was Crown Prosecutor for the City and District of Montreal from 1933 to 1942. Beginning in 1949, he won six consecutive elections for the Liberals with pluralities in Mount Royal ranging from over 20,000 to a mere 500 votes during the Diefenbaker sweep of 1958, when he was the only English-speaking Liberal to win a seat in Quebec.

After the 1958 election, Prime Minister Diefenbaker said he would follow the British practice of allowing a member of the opposition to chair the Public Accounts Committee which scrutinizes and reports on government spending. After consultation with the Liberals, Diefenbaker chose Mr. Macnaughton. The committee soon began to play a more significant role in parliamentary affairs. Macnaughton insisted on more frequent meetings and closer, more systematic attention to recommendations of the Auditor General. His reports were critical without being unnecessarily harsh or partisan. When the Liberals won the 1963 election Macnaughton was a logical choice as Speaker.

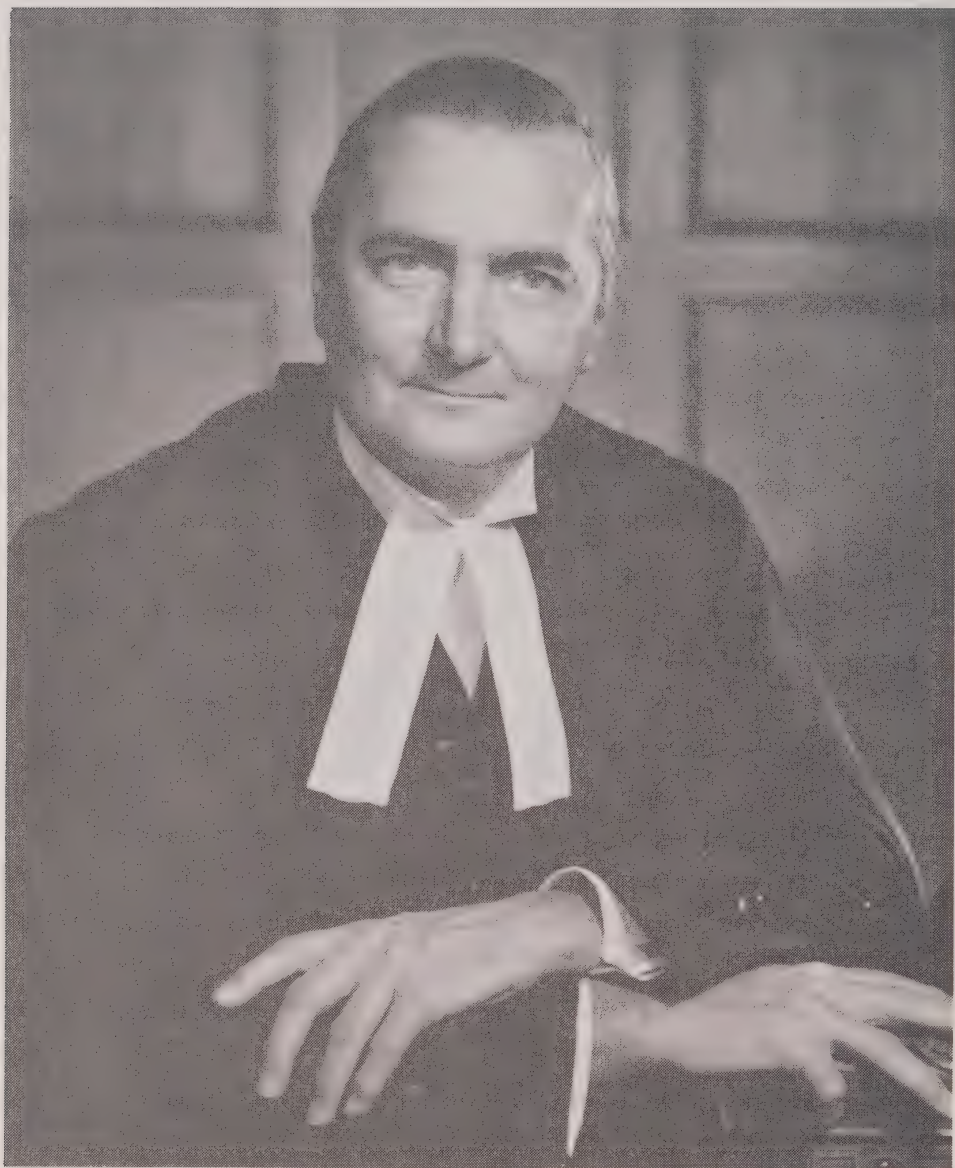
The 26th Parliament produced some of the longest, bitterest debates in Canadian history. His Speakership was punctuated by the flag debate, security and morality scandals and several unusual incidents such as the day a visitor threw a container of blood onto the floor of the Commons. Personal animosities developed between members and

civilized parliamentary debate became difficult. Macnaughton quickly realized that in such circumstances the Speaker cannot always prevent disorderly debate. He can only keep the fight restricted to the parties and not allow it to turn on the Chair so that when the fury has passed the office of Speaker will emerge unscathed.

Macnaughton determined to do whatever he could to bring about long-term changes in the way parliamentary business was conducted. As Chairman of a Special Committee on Procedure and Organization, he called on members of all parties to stop criticizing and to begin to grapple with long-standing procedural problems. Under his direction four subcommittees were established, each chaired by a member from a different party. For eighteen months Macnaughton prodded, encouraged, cajoled and generally used his influence to keep the reform movement alive. The subcommittees eventually produced numerous recommendations calling for a new allocation of time procedure, a completely new committee structure, the abolition of appeals from rulings of the Speaker, new research facilities for members of parliament and many other changes. Few of the proposals were adopted during Macnaughton's term but subsequent Parliaments enacted almost all the recommendations.

Macnaughton was also the first Speaker to invoke Standing Order 1 which used to say that in all cases not provided under Canadian rules, the practices and usages of the United Kingdom Parliament may be applied. He invoked this provision to avoid what he perceived as a potentially serious French-English split during the flag debate of 1964. The resolution proposing a new Canadian flag was actually a two-part motion. One part made the Maple Leaf the official Canadian flag. The other said the Union Jack would continue to be flown as a symbol of Canadian membership in the Commonwealth and a sign of allegiance to the Crown. Some members asked the motion be divided so they could vote in favour of one part and against the other. There was no authority in the Canadian rules to allow the Speaker to split the motion but Macnaughton felt it would greatly facilitate resolution of this difficult question. He said the British Speaker had such authority and under Standing Order 1 he ordered the motion to be divided. The House was taken completely by surprise. Prime Minister Pearson had to discard much of his carefully prepared speech in support of the original motion.

After two exhausting years in the Chair, Macnaughton did not contest the 1965 election. The following year he was appointed to the Senate, where he became one of its most active members until his retirement in 1978.



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**Lucien Lamoureux 1966-1974**

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*Speakers of the House of Commons must strive not only to be impartial but to be seen as such. This latter task is difficult, since they are usually elected and re-elected to the House as members of a political party. Every election is a reminder of their political affiliation. One way to remove doubt about the Speaker's impartiality is for him to resign from his political party and seek election as an independent. Only one person, Lucien Lamoureux, has taken such a drastic step, but in so doing he raised the status of the office. He served longer than any previous Speaker and created standards against which subsequent presiding officers have been measured.*

Lamoureux was born in Ottawa in 1920. He attended the University of Ottawa, earning a Master's degree in philosophy before studying law at Osgoode Hall in Toronto. After graduation in 1945 Lamoureux went to work for Lionel Chevrier, long-time cabinet minister in the governments of Mackenzie King and Louis St. Laurent. In 1954 Lamoureux left politics to open a law practice in Cornwall. He remained active in the Liberal Party while becoming well known in local affairs, particularly in connection with the Separate School Board, the Children's Aid Society and the Community Chest.

First elected in 1962, Lamoureux took an immediate interest in the rules and procedures of the House. When the Liberals came to power in 1963 he was named Deputy Speaker. Mr. Lamoureux attended only two meetings of the Liberal Caucus before deciding to withdraw in order to emphasize the impartial nature of his position. Following the 1965 election Prime Minister Pearson nominated Lamoureux as Speaker. Over the next eight years he made numerous important rulings as the practical implications of recent procedural reforms worked their way through the House. During two minority Parliaments his authoritative decisions and calm manner kept the lid on potentially explosive situations.

One such instance occurred in February 1968 when the Pearson government was defeated on third reading of a financial bill. The opposition called for the immediate adjournment of the House and the resignation of the government. The Liberals refused, saying the defeat did not represent a vote of nonconfidence in the government. The

Speaker, as usual, was in the middle of the situation. Davie Fulton of the Conservatives suggested the Speaker take it upon himself to adjourn the House. Speaker Lamoureux pointed out that he had no such authority except in cases of disorder. With tempers rising by the minute Lamoureux was spared the task of becoming the first Canadian Speaker to suspend a sitting on account of disorder when the House reached its normal adjournment hour at 10 pm.

By April 1968, Mr. Lamoureux had decided he would not fight another election as a member of a political party. He asked for all-party agreement to support his candidacy as an independent. Both Prime Minister Trudeau and the Leader of the Opposition, Robert Stanfield, were anxious to keep Lamoureux as Speaker so neither the Liberals nor the Progressive Conservative nominated candidates to oppose him. The New Democratic Party had already nominated a candidate and was unwilling to bring pressure on their man to withdraw. Lamoureux won a landslide victory over his NDP opponent. He was re-elected Speaker but in a speech seconding the nomination Mr. Stanfield warned that the right of his party supporters to nominate a candidate in Lamoureux's riding could not be abrogated indefinitely. He said a better solution would be to choose the Speaker from a separate riding consisting of the elected members of the House of Commons.

Questions about the status of the Speaker arose again before the 1972 election. Lamoureux again announced he would run as an independent but this time both the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats nominated candidates to oppose him. Despite the handicap of running as an independent in an election fought by parties Lamoureux won by nearly 5,000 votes over his closest rival. Again Lamoureux was chosen Speaker and by April 1974 he had been in the Chair for 3,010 days, surpassing the previous record held by Rodolphe Lemieux from 1922-1930. In September 1974 Mr. Lamoureux announced his retirement from politics. Shortly thereafter he was appointed Canadian ambassador to Belgium.



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**James Alexander Jerome 1974-1980**

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*The election of James Jerome to a second term as Speaker after the 1979 election marked the first time a member of an opposition party was chosen to preside over the House. No doubt his selection was influenced by many factors, including a shortage of French-speaking Conservatives, one of whom would have had to become Speaker if the tradition of alternation was to continue. The choice was another step toward establishing the Speakership as an independent institution rather than a reward for members of the party in power.*

Jerome was born in Kingston in 1933 but received his primary and secondary schooling in Toronto before studying law at Osgoode Hall. After being admitted to the Ontario Bar he moved to Sudbury to establish a law practice. He served a year on city council and in 1967 contested a federal by-election for the Liberal Party but was defeated. A general election was called the next year and Jerome won the seat by more than seven thousand votes.

In his first session of Parliament Jerome served on the procedure committee that recommended the highly controversial allocation of time or "guillotine" rule. Next session he chaired a Special Committee on Election Expenses but before its final report was tabled Jerome had been promoted to Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council. In this position he became thoroughly conversant with the rules of the House and learned the importance of maintaining good working relations with members of all parties.

During the 1972-74 minority parliament Jerome served as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. The committee dealt with highly controversial bills, including abolition of capital punishment and wiretap legislation. The committee was not only divided on party lines but also polarized between "law and order" and civil rights factions. Jerome kept the respect of all groups as he manoeuvred his way through a maze of procedural disputes. His reputation for impartiality was enhanced considerably on June 28, 1973 when he rejected a government-supported amendment to the capital punishment bill because it altered the principle of the legislation. The committee was supposed to concern itself only with details of bills.

Prime Minister Trudeau asked Jerome to become Speaker in 1974. Unfortunately Mr. Trudeau apparently neglected to consult the Leader of the Opposition before making his nomination. Mr. Stanfield called this a backward step and for the first time in twelve years an opposition spokesman refused to second the nomination. To his credit Mr. Stanfield emphasized his quarrel was with the government and not the Speaker, who he said had his party's full support. Another problem stemmed from the fact Mr. Jerome was succeeding the extremely popular Lucien Lamoureux. Comparisons were inevitable and the new Speaker needed time to establish his own style and authority.

Like most Speakers, Jerome was concerned about his ability to represent his constituents from his position in the Chair. The Prime Minister assured him that cabinet ministers would take a sympathetic view of any reasonable request conveyed to them by the Speaker. Still there were problems, as in 1978 when strikes and layoffs threatened to close some of Sudbury's mining companies with a consequent loss of thousands of jobs. Unable to make partisan public comments on the situation, Jerome worked quietly to bring about a meeting of management and labour with federal and provincial representatives to try to work out a long-term solution to the problem. But in the House of Commons when a member from a neighbouring riding asked for an emergency debate on the issue the Speaker had to refuse, in keeping with his own previous rulings about what constituted grounds for an emergency debate.

The test of whether a representative has done a satisfactory job comes at election time. Jerome gave serious consideration to following the Lamoureux precedent and seeking re-election as an independent but on reflection he decided to run as a Liberal. Despite the poor showing of the Liberal Party in 1979, Speaker Jerome held onto his seat by more than twelve thousand votes.

His second period in the Chair lasted only sixty-five days but they were filled with as much pressure and tension as the previous five years. No party had a majority. Every vote raised the possibility of a tie whereby the Speaker would have to cast the deciding ballot. Jerome was also under constant pressure from Social Credit members who demanded recognition as an official party although they did not have enough elected members to qualify under the House rules. In November 1979, the Liberals accused the Conservative House Leader of trying to influence the Speaker on this matter. Jerome said that regular discussions between the Speaker and the House Leaders were an accepted part of parliamentary life, but he noted that in the fragile political situation it might be necessary for the Speaker to be more formal in his relations with all members. Following defeat of the Conservative government in December 1979, Jerome decided not to contest another election. A month later Prime Minister Clark appointed him Associate Chief Justice of the Federal Court in Ottawa.



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**Jeanne Sauvé 1980-1984**

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*Parliament has traditionally been a male preserve. The first woman was not sworn in until 1921 and over the next fifty years only seventeen others were successful in winning election to the House of Commons. No woman had represented a Quebec riding until 1972 when Jeanne Sauvé and two others were elected. Eight years later, after holding three ministerial offices, Jeanne Sauvé became the first woman to serve as Speaker of the House of Commons. Four years later she resigned in order to accept an even greater distinction as Canada's first female Governor General.*

Jeanne Benoit Sauvé was born in Saskatchewan where her father, an Ottawa builder, had a contract to construct the Roman Catholic Church in Prud'homme. Her early education was at a private girls school run by the Grey Nuns in Ottawa. French was spoken in the classroom and at home but she became fluently bilingual at an early age.

At the University of Montreal she studied economics and became president of a student organization known as Jeunesse étudiante Catholique. While helping organize its fifteenth anniversary she met Maurice Sauvé. They were married on September 24, 1948 and sailed the next day for London where he had a scholarship to study economics. In 1950 they moved to Paris where he continued his studies and she worked briefly for the youth section of UNESCO. She also obtained an arts degree from the University of Paris. Following their return to Canada in 1952 Jeanne Sauvé began a career in journalism. She worked on a freelance basis for both the French and English networks of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as well as for other networks becoming one of the best known television commentators in Quebec. In 1970 an American network hired her to do a special program explaining the "October Crisis" involving the kidnapping of a British diplomat and a Quebec politician.

Mme Sauvé was elected to the House in 1972 and almost immediately was sworn in as Minister of State for Science and Technology. Created in 1971 the Ministry is responsible for co-ordinating policy regarding the allocation of funds, material and personnel relating to science. As a new minister in a relatively new area she had lots to learn but quickly established a reputation for being able to grasp complex issues. In the course of presenting memoranda to

cabinet on such topics as northern development and oceanography she gained valuable experience about how the decision-making process in Ottawa works. In 1974 Mme Sauvé was promoted to Minister of the Environment where she learned the intricacies of federal-provincial relations, particularly in an area where jurisdiction is not always clear.

Mme Sauvé was best known as Minister of Communications where she served from 1975-1979. Among other things she was influential in consolidating the Canadian space industry by persuading cabinet to spend twenty-four million dollars to upgrade Canada's only satellite test site. She also argued successfully for expenditure of nine million dollars on Telidon, a Canada-designed video text system which could put Canada in the forefront of the information revolution.

Following the Liberal victory in the 1980 general election Prime Minister Trudeau asked Mme Sauvé to take on the new challenge of presiding over debates of the House of Commons. In addition to the usual factors to be taken into consideration the offer came in the midst of the Quebec referendum campaign. Mme Sauvé decided that in spite of the Speaker's nonpartisan position she could still support the federal cause in Quebec. Thus during the early and extremely important weeks of her Speakership she was engaged not only in trying to master the rules and social customs of the House but at the week-end was off to Montreal to join the fight against Quebec independence. To further complicate her initiation period she had to study and respond to a highly critical report on the House of Commons prepared by the Auditor General at the request of her predecessor, Mr. Jerome.

The Auditor General concluded that the general and financial administration of the House was significantly below a minimum acceptable standard. Mme Sauvé accepted this criticism and decided the House of Commons would become a model of efficient management. The inevitable changes in personnel and procedure met some resistance but Mme Sauvé remained determined to see the recommendations of the Auditor General implemented.

In March 1981 she presided over debate on the Government's constitutional resolution. The Official Opposition mounted a determined filibuster based on numerous points of order and questions of privilege. All of these had to be dealt with by the chair, often in the midst of great excitement among the members. A tense atmosphere prevailed for nearly two weeks until the government and opposition finally worked out a compromise.

A more serious parliamentary crisis arose in March 1982 when the opposition parties objected to the massive *Energy Security Act* and asked it be divided into several pieces of legislation to be considered separately. After moving a motion to adjourn, members of the Official Opposition refused to appear for the vote which, by tradition, is held only after both the Whips of the Government and Official Opposition

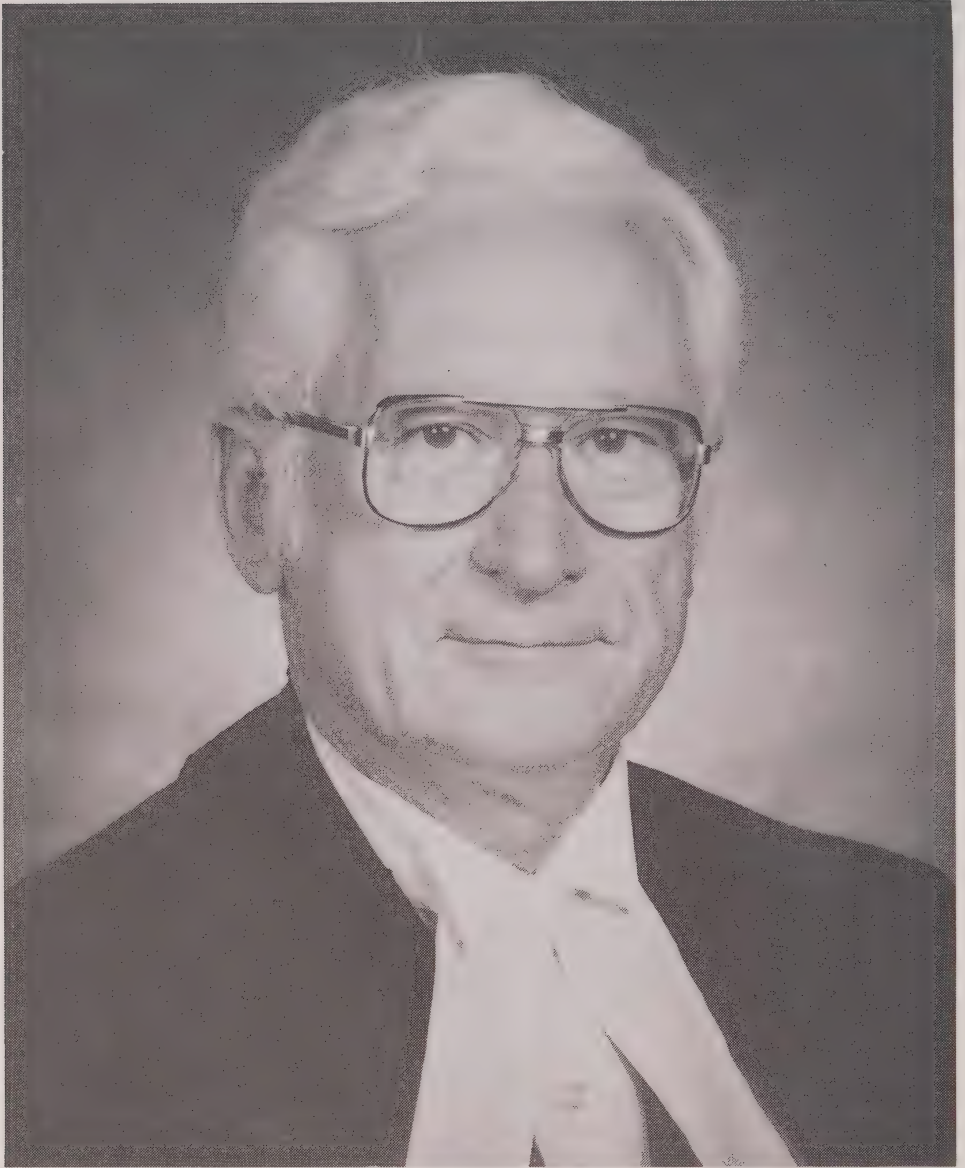
indicate they are ready. The bells summoning members to vote continued to ring. The pressure mounted on the Speaker to break the deadlock. Mme Sauvé maintained it was up to the parties to resolve the dispute. Finally after more than two weeks of bell ringing, during which the Speaker's chair had to be occupied around the clock, an agreement was reached whereby the omnibus bill was divided in return for agreement on a timetable for passage of the separate bills. When the House resumed following the unprecedented incident the Speaker made a short statement elaborating her reasons for not intervening. She concluded with an observation that the time had come for a thorough review of certain aspects of parliamentary procedure.

Another difficult period for her Speakership was the debate on a bill to alter long-standing subsidies for grain prairie producers who send their produce west through the Crow's Nest Pass in British Columbia. From the time it was first introduced on May 10, 1983 to its eventual adoption by the House in November the bill was subjected to every delaying tactic a determined opposition could muster. Again the Speaker had to rule on hundreds of points of order and questions of privilege. At one stage she ruled out of order, for procedural reasons, some seventy-eight amendments.

Passage of the "Crow Bill" paved the way for prorogation of the first session of the 32nd Parliament on November 30, 1983. It had lasted three and a half years, the longest in Canadian history and one of the most difficult for a presiding officer.

Shortly after the second session began it was rumored that Mme Sauvé would soon be resigning to take up some other public function. This was confirmed when Prime Minister Trudeau announced she would become Canada's next Governor General. She was sworn in on May 14, 1984 thus embarking on yet another step in her already remarkable career. Mme Sauvé returned to private life at the completion of her term as Governor General in 1990. She died in Montreal at the age of 70 in January 1993.





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**Lloyd Francis 1984**

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*No Speaker had a more unusual electoral record than Lloyd Francis. In 1962 he ran for a seat in the House of Commons and lost. The following year he tried again and this time was successful. He was defeated in 1965, elected in 1968, defeated in 1972, elected in 1974, defeated in 1979, elected in 1980 and defeated in 1984. While he lost as many elections as he won, not all Parliaments were of equal length. Thus Lloyd Francis was in office for all but five years from 1963 - 1984. His topsy-turvy career made him the butt of many political jokes, many told by himself. However, even those who voted against him respected the personal qualities of resilience and perseverance that enabled him to compile such a record.*

Members who represent Ottawa ridings are spared hours of transcontinental travel. On the other hand the Speaker is the "Mayor" of Parliament Hill, a small but very special community and he likely has a good number of constituents among his employees. The Speaker has (or shares with the Speaker of the Senate) jurisdiction over half a dozen buildings housing members and staff, a restaurant, five cafeterias, a Library, a printing plant, a broadcasting service, a computer network, a security force, a barbershop, a messenger and mini-bus service and numerous other support and administrative services.

Lloyd Francis was born in Ottawa in 1920. He attended the University of Toronto and after graduation in 1940 took a job in Montréal. He soon joined the Royal Canadian Air Force as a radar mechanic and air navigator. After the war he returned to university obtaining an M.A. from Toronto and a doctorate in economics from the University of Wisconsin. From 1948 to 1951 he lectured in economics at the University of Buffalo, then joined the Department of National Health and Welfare in Ottawa as a senior economist.

In 1958 Francis became President of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada and the following year entered municipal politics winning a seat on Ottawa City Council. He was a member of the Board of Control and Deputy Mayor from 1960-1963.

In the course of his career he held a number of parliamentary offices including Deputy Government Whip, Chief Government Whip and

Parliamentary Secretary. Mr. Francis was always passed over for promotion to the cabinet, in part no doubt because he disagreed with certain government policies and programs. As the representative of a riding composed largely of public servants he spoke out against decentralization intended to shift departments from Ottawa, the handling of collective bargaining with the public service, abuses in the implementation of the government's bilingualism policy and changes in the indexing provisions of public service pensions.

Francis was named Deputy Speaker in 1980. While respecting the convention whereby the Deputy Speaker does not enter debate in the House he attended committee meetings dealing with bills that affected the public service and tried to represent the interests of his constituents.

As Deputy Speaker he gained invaluable experience in the Chair during the lengthy first session of the thirty-second Parliament. At one point during debate on the constitutional proposals several opposition members left their seats and approached the chair in an attempt to interrupt the voting, Francis maintained his composure as he did through all the long and often heated debates over which he presided. When Madame Sauvé resigned he was the logical choice to serve as Speaker for the remainder of the Parliament, particularly since the months before an election tend to be very animated and require an experienced presiding officer.

Lloyd Francis faced the electorate with some trepidation in 1984. The overwhelming tide in favour of the Conservatives and his own tradition of losing alternate elections produced the predictable result. As always he accepted defeat with grace and good nature. The new Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, in one of his early acts appointed him as Canadian ambassador to Portugal where he served until 1987 when he returned to Ottawa.





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**John Bosley 1984-1986**

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*John Bosley began his term determined to bring as fresh an approach to the Speakership as the new government had promised to bring to the affairs of the nation. His resignation after two tumultuous years opened the way to a completely new method of choosing Speakers in Canada. Theoretically neither the Prime Minister nor any other member can force the resignation of a Speaker who has the confidence of the House. This security can be more illusory than real. The unfortunate lesson of the Bosley Speakership is that criticism both overt and subtle by a few members coupled with a failure of others to come to a Speaker's defence can undermine a beleaguered presiding officer as much as a motion of censure.*

John Bosley was born in Toronto in 1947 making him one of the youngest Speakers ever. He attended Upper Canada College and later studied at the University of Toronto and York University before entering the family real estate business. In 1974 he won a seat on Toronto City Council and was re-elected in 1976 becoming a member of the Executive Committee of Metropolitan Toronto.

He won the seat of Don Valley West for the Progressive Conservatives in 1979 and soon earned a reputation as a quiet but hardworking member serving a time as Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister Joe Clark. The Clark government was defeated after only a few months but Bosley was re-elected and supported Clark in the 1983 leadership convention ultimately won by Brian Mulroney.

In opposition from 1980 to 1984 John Bosley was critic for cultural policy, Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Task Force on Revenue Canada and a member of the committee that staked out his party's strategy in the constitutional debate.

When the dust had settled after the 1984 general election the Conservatives had won 211 of the 282 seats in the House. Half of the new House, including several cabinet ministers, had no parliamentary experience. The opposition benches were full of former ministers and aggressive newcomers determined to make their mark. The media considered itself a kind of unofficial opposition. In such circumstances the life of a new presiding officer promised to be difficult.

Speaker Bosley had some obvious attributes — intelligence, a sense of humor and mastery of the second language. But other qualities such as patience and the ability to judge the mood of the House were somewhat harder to acquire.

Throughout his first session Speaker Bosley came under criticism from members and the media for his handling of Question Period. At different times he was accused of favouring the government, the opposition or just being inconsistent. In February 1986 he made a statement outlining the principles he intended to follow in Question Period and asked for co-operation of the members. He added, perhaps only half jokingly, that repeated breaches of decorum might “blur his vision” making it difficult for him to recognize offending members when they sought the floor.

Things improved slightly but his task as Speaker was complicated by having to preside while the House was in the midst of adopting some of the most radical procedural changes since parliamentary institutions were adopted in this country. One of the proposed changes related to the very method of choosing a Speaker. The origin of this idea can be traced back to the “bells crisis” of 1982 and the subsequent report of the Special Committee on the Standing Orders and Procedure. The Committee felt the House should exercise a more direct role over the nomination of candidates for the Speakership. “The Speaker belongs to the House, not to the Government or the Opposition. Although the servant of the House, the Speaker is expected to show leadership in promoting and safeguarding the interests of the House and its members”.

The report said the Speaker should cease to be nominated by the Prime Minister and should instead be elected by secret ballot of all members of the House. Balloting would continue until a single candidate received at least 50 per cent of the votes cast plus one. Before it could be adopted Parliament was dissolved for the 1984 election. The new Conservative Government gave high priority to parliamentary reform and immediately announced creation of a new special committee on reform headed by James McGrath. The McGrath committee also looked at the method of electing the Speaker and heard evidence from Speaker Bosley. He raised some potential pitfalls for consideration by the Committee. “We might wind up with the situation where people campaign to be Speaker. I am not sure that is in our best interest as a House of Commons. We have not really ever seen that.... I am worried about the ability of the Chair to start and end impartially, if the method of getting there were an electoral process, as we know it as politicians. I do not know how you would not get to that point if you started having it truly elected. I do not know how you would not get to campaigning for it.”



In due course the government announced it agreed with the principle of electing the Speaker by secret ballot. Standing Orders implementing the new procedure were adopted by the House in February 1986. They fix responsibility for presiding over the election with the retiring Speaker or the senior private member present.

In September amid rumours of schemes among officials in the Prime Minister's Office to find a way of replacing the Speaker, Mr. Bosley announced his resignation in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the two opposition parties. He noted the lack of discipline in the House which characterized the last months of the session and the resulting erosion of public respect for Parliament. "These two years have led me to understand acutely how essential and how vulnerable this institution is. The House of Commons is the country's most important institution, and it is in a crisis of our own making. Restoring the self-respect of Parliament requires both a fundamental change of attitude and a catalyst. For my part, I think I can contribute more effectively to that reform as a Private Member in a House that has freely invested a new Speaker with full authority."

The voters of Don Valley West returned Mr. Bosley to the House for a fourth consecutive term in 1988. He subsequently served as Chairman of the House Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade. In 1993 he along with every other Conservative candidate in the province of Ontario went down to defeat as the Liberals swept the province.



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**John Fraser 1986-1994**

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*The House of Commons met at three o'clock in the afternoon of September 30, 1986 to elect a new Speaker. For the first time the election was by secret ballot. Retiring Speaker John Bosley read the names of thirty-nine candidates. Members left their desks, proceeded through the lobbies and re-entered the Chamber through doors on either side of the Chair. They voted in portable booths set up on each side of the Clerk's table. Under the rules adopted for this procedure neither the number of votes nor the order was revealed by the Clerk who counted the votes in another room. After the first ballot thirteen names remained on the ballot but since nobody knew the identity of the front runner none dared to withdraw. Ballot by ballot tension mounted as the candidates were eliminated. The eleventh and final ballot was between the Deputy Speaker, Marcel Danis, and former cabinet minister John Fraser. Finally at 1:48 am Mr. Bosley announced the results, left the chair and escorted John Fraser to the dais.*

**J**ohn Fraser was born in Yokohama, Japan in 1931 where his father worked for a Canadian company which sold lumber to Japan. The family moved back to Canada in 1935. He was raised in Vancouver attending the University of British Columbia and helped to pay his way by working in the forest industry, surveying, and later running a string of packhorses in the Yukon. After graduation he built a flourishing career as a lawyer first in Victoria, then Powell River and later with a Vancouver firm where he eventually became a senior partner on the litigation side.

After a stint as President of the Young Progressive Conservatives of British Columbia and later of the PC Association in that province he decided to run for the House of Commons in 1968. He was defeated but ran again in 1972, was elected and has represented Vancouver South ever since. Described by many as one of the brightest new members his talents were recognized by Robert Stanfield who made him environment critic and then labour critic in the shadow cabinet. When Mr. Stanfield decided to retire as leader John Fraser sought the leadership of his party. Although given little chance of winning he ran



a serious, issues oriented campaign that succeeded in establishing him as a national rather than a regional spokesman.

The new leader, Joe Clark, named him to the Inner Cabinet as Minister of the Environment and Postmaster General following the 1979 election. Nine months later he was back in the opposition following the government's defeat but when the Conservatives returned in 1984 Brian Mulroney made John Fraser Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and a member of the Cabinet Committee on Planning and Priorities. Mr. Fraser travelled extensively across Canada and tried to be responsive to the needs of fishermen on both coasts facing very complex and difficult problems.

In September 1985 he found himself in political difficulties over his decision to overrule some of his departmental inspectors and release a large quantity of canned tuna declared unfit for human consumption. When the matter was featured on a national television program the opposition subjected the Minister to several days of intense questioning in the House. Mr. Fraser tried to point out some of the factors behind his decision. For one thing there was no question of the tuna being a health hazard. The issue was one of quality and the accuracy of methods used for establishing grades of tuna can be a subjective matter. Furthermore, over 400 jobs in New Brunswick were at stake. However, as the incident unfolded it became clear the Minister would have to take responsibility and he announced his resignation from cabinet.

Despite the setback he resolved not to become bitter and took solace from the continued personal respect he maintained from members in all parties. This intangible asset turned into something more concrete following the resignation of Speaker Bosley. When the vacancy was announced Mr. Fraser was on a horseback riding trip in the Chilcotin mountain country of British Columbia. His first reaction was to advise the Clerk of the House, as required by the rules, to withdraw his name from consideration. On the urging of members from all parties he subsequently changed his mind and decided to let his name stand. Unlike some candidates Mr. Fraser did not campaign for the job but when the votes were counted on the last ballot he had truly returned from the wilderness as the first Speaker whose mandate derived not from the Prime Minister but from a free and secret ballot of his peers.

No Speaker ever had so little time to prepare for the job but Mr. Fraser's many years of experience in the House carried him in good stead through the first days. During his first year as Speaker he also made a number of significant rulings such as one in April 1987 which brought an end to debate over controversial drug patent legislation. Procedurally the question was simply whether a government motion to bypass routine business and go directly to government business was in order. Its importance derived from the fact that routine business offers the opposition numerous opportunities to delay proceedings through

questions of privilege and points of order. Indeed the House had spent a good part of a week in such debate before the government motion.

In his ruling Speaker Fraser suggested “our procedures are being used for purposes for which they were never intended, and the public could be pardoned for believing that our rules have no logical basis at all”. The bill having received thorough consideration in standing committee and in the House, Speaker Fraser argued that “there comes a time when a government has a right to get on with its programme”. He based the ruling largely on common sense and did not regard it as an open invitation to governments to thwart opposition. Governments have the right to expect passage of their legislation and opposition parties continue to have a right to reasonable delaying tactics. There comes a time when someone has to draw the line and the ruling made it clear that, in certain conditions, this responsibility falls clearly to the Speaker. The ruling was accepted with perhaps some reluctance, however Members on both sides of the House seemed to acknowledge this role for the presiding officer they had chosen.

Mr. Fraser was re-elected in Vancouver South in the 1988 general election and once again elected Speaker by a secret ballot in December 1988. Once again he has been called upon to make some very significant rulings. One of the most notable was in the midst of the long debate over the Goods and Services Tax. The Opposition had protested newspapers advertisements taken out by the Department of Finance informing people that Canada’s Federal Sales Tax system would change on January 1, 1991. The government, they argued, had no right to assume that the legislation would indeed be adopted. In a carefully worded ruling Mr. Fraser concluded that the advertising may not have breached the rules in the narrow sense of the term but it was in his opinion “ill-conceived and it does a disservice to the great traditions of this place.” He said the ad was objectionable and should never be repeated. The Goods and Service legislation was eventually passed and the tax came into effect on January 1 but the ruling sent a clear message to ministers and departmental officials.

On the administrative side Speaker Fraser’s longtime interest in environmental matters manifested itself through enthusiastic support for recycling and other “green” initiatives launched within the areas of his jurisdiction. He was committed to making the work of the House of Commons better known and understood to the public. To this end he created a Public Information Office responsible for answering questions and providing information to the public. As a personal project to mark the 125th anniversary of Confederation he wrote a civics primer, *The House of Commons in Action* published shortly before he left office. John Fraser did not seek re-election in 1993 and a few months after the election the new Liberal Government named him an ambassador at large with special responsibility for the environment.



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**Gilbert Parent 1994-**

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*Early returns on election night, October 25 1993, made it apparent the 35th Parliament would be a most unusual one. The Liberals started quickly taking all but 2 of 131 seats in the Maritimes and Ontario. The Bloc Québécois fielding candidates only in Quebec's 75 seats and running on a platform of sovereignty for that province returned 54 members, enough to form Her Majesty's Official Opposition. When results came in from the West it became clear the Reform Party had made a major breakthrough, increasing its representation from 1 to 52. The Progressive Conservatives with 2 seats and the New Democrats with 9 both lost their status as recognized parties in the House. The electorate had spoken. More than two-thirds of the members of the House would be newcomers. On January 17, 1994 members gathered to choose their Speaker for a Parliament that promised to be filled with excitement and tension. After 6 ballots and nearly 7 hours, including an unprecedented tie on the fifth ballot, the task of presiding over the new House was entrusted to a parliamentarian whose career has emphasized qualities of loyalty, non partisanship, and sensitivity to the wishes of constituents.*

**G**ilbert Parent, the youngest of five children, was born in 1935 in Mattawa, Ontario. His father was a WWI veteran who had survived the poison gas attacks but never fully regained his health. When Gilbert was five years old the family moved to Welland in Southern Ontario where his father found work as a janitor. Gib Parent was an enthusiastic athlete playing football, baseball, hockey and basketball. At Notre Dame High School he met Father Patrick Fogarty who became a major influence in his life. Father Patrick realized the Parents did not have the means to send their son to college so he helped Gib obtain a football scholarship to St. Joseph's College in Indiana. Father Patrick even paid the boy's train fare.

St. Joseph's had an enrollment of about 1600 — all boys. It was run by a German Order, the Precious Blood Fathers who instilled a sense of order and discipline on the student body. Parent's football career came to a sudden end when he was seriously injured in an automobile

accident after his freshman year. In a larger college this might have meant the end of his education but fortunately the baseball coach at St Joseph's asked him to try out for the team. By making the transition from halfback to catcher, Parent was able to retain his scholarship and complete his studies earning a Bachelor of Science degree. He continued his education by obtaining a teaching certificate from the Ontario College of Education, a Master of Arts Degree from Niagara University and a Master of Education degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo. While teaching he worked for several years toward a doctorate in educational administration but had to put this aside when he was elected to the House of Commons.

Gilbert Parent had always wanted to be a teacher. He enjoyed teaching and realized that were it not for his education, he was probably destined for a life working in the steel mills of southern Ontario. He taught French and Physical Education at his old High School in Welland before following Father Patrick to Dennis Morris High School in nearby St. Catharines. Eventually with a wife, five children and an elderly mother to support he made the difficult decision to leave the separate school system for a job as vice principal with the Public School Board in Thorold. His first venture into politics was at the school board level where he served as a member and later Chairman of the St. Catharines Separate School Board.

In 1974 he sought and won the Liberal nomination for the federal election. He defeated the incumbent Conservative as the Trudeau Liberals formed a majority government. Barely a month later the thrill of victory was overshadowed by personal tragedy. His only son was killed when hit by a car.

Gib Parent was re-elected in 1979 and 1980. Prime Minister Trudeau named him parliamentary secretary for three terms. He started with the Minister of Veterans Affairs (1977 to 1979) then moving to Labour (1979 to 1981) and finally to Fitness and Amateur Sport (1981 to 1983). He also served as Chairman of the Liberal Caucus for three years including the difficult period leading up to the patriation of the Canadian constitution in 1982.

Debate over the abolition of capital punishment was high on the public agenda during his first years in Ottawa. Mr. Parent took the position, somewhat unusual at the time, that he would circulate a questionnaire to his constituents and vote in accordance with their wishes. His personal opinion on this issue, he argued, was a private matter. He had promised to reflect the views of his constituents which turned out to be largely against abolition.

During his first term he joined a few other members from all parties who formed a prayer group that met for breakfast on Wednesdays. He enjoyed the philosophic discussions and non partisan camaraderie that contrasted with the hurly-burly pace of being an MP. In 1984 the

Conservatives won a huge majority that left Gib Parent as one of the casualties. He learned that while you are an MP everyone wants to talk to you, but once you lose the phone stops ringing. He noted that only a few former colleagues called to see how he was doing and nearly all of them had been members of the prayer group.

The shock of defeat took some time to wear off but soon he returned to teaching. He had the good fortune to teach Canadian government and history to a gifted group of students — an experience he found rewarding and exhilarating. Nevertheless, Mr. Parent decided to make another run for elected office in 1988. He took back his old seat from the person who had defeated him in 1984. This time the Liberals were in Opposition and he became Critic for Youth and later for Labour. He ran again in 1993 defeating his nearest opponent by nearly 14,000 votes.

After the new Liberal cabinet was named speculation began about who would be elected Speaker. After much reflection, Gilbert Parent decided to let his name stand. He was mentioned in the press but not usually among the top two or three contenders. Some candidates decided that with so many new Members of Parliament a little campaigning for the job was warranted, at least to the extent of accepting invitations to address the Opposition Caucuses. Mr. Parent declined to meet with either the Bloc or Reform caucus or to campaign overtly. He did write a letter to all members indicating he intended to let his name stand. He suggested he would leave it to others to make his case for the Speakership. In the end, his view that one does not seek the position of Speaker seemed to strike the right chord.

Speaker Parent pledged his best efforts to ensure that MPs comport themselves with dignity, respect and civility in the strenuous debates that are sure to follow. Considering the potentially intractable positions represented in the 35th Parliament, that could prove to be a major accomplishment.



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## SPEAKERS OF THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS

**W**hich Speaker kept a pistol in his desk drawer to shoot rabbits he spotted nibbling the shrubs on Parliament Hill? Who is the only person to have served as Speaker of both the House of Commons and a provincial legislative assembly? Which Speaker had a censure motion moved against him? Who is the only Speaker to have lost his seat in an election where his party managed to form the government?

The answers to these and many other questions as well as much information about the office of Speaker will be found in this collection of biographies of the individuals who have held this high office since Confederation. Each biography is accompanied by a photograph of the Speaker.

The present Speaker, the Honourable Gilbert Parent, has written a preface to the Collection.

Gary Levy is a former member of the Research Branch of the Library of Parliament. Since 1980, he has been editor of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review* published by the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Co-editor of *Provincial and Territorial Legislatures in Canada* and author of numerous articles on parliamentary affairs he has taught political science at the University of Western Ontario and the University of Ottawa.